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## The Claverings

CHAPTER I.

JULIA BRABAZON.



THE gardens of Clavering Park were removed some three hundred yards from the large, square, sombre-looking stone mansion which was the country-house of Sir Hugh Clavering, the eleventh baronet of that name; and in these gardens, which had but little of beauty to recommend them, I will introduce my readers to two of the personages with whom I wish to make them acquainted in the following story. It was now the end of August, and the parterres, beds, and bits of lawn were dry, disfigured, and almost ugly, from the effects of a long drought. In gardens to which care and labour are given abundantly, flower-beds will be pretty, and grass will

be green, let the weather be what it may; but care and labour were but scantily bestowed on the Clavering Gardens, and everything was yellow, adust, harsh, and dry. Over the burnt turf towards a gate

that led to the house, a lady was walking, and by her side there walked a gentleman.

"You are going in, then, Miss Brabazon," said the gentleman, and it was very manifest from his tone that he intended to convey some deep reproach in his words.

"Of course I am going in," said the lady. "You asked me to walk with you, and I refused. You have now waylaid me, and therefore I shall escape,—unless I am prevented by violence." As she spoke she stood still for a moment, and looked into his face with a smile which seemed to indicate that if such violence were used, within rational bounds, she would not feel herself driven to great anger.

But though she might be inclined to be playful, he was by no means in that mood. "And why did you refuse me when I asked you?" said he.

"For two reasons, partly because I thought it better to avoid any conversation with you."

"That is civil to an old friend."

"But chiefly," and now as she spoke she drew herself up, and dismissed the smile from her face, and allowed her eyes to fall upon the ground; "but chiefly because I thought that Lord Ongar would prefer that I should not roam alone about Clavering Park with any young gentleman while I am down here; and that he might specially object to my roaming with you, were he to know that you and I were—old acquaintances. Now I have been very frank, Mr. Clavering, and I think that that ought to be enough."

"You are afraid of him already, then?"

"I am afraid of offending any one whom I love, and especially any one to whom I owe any duty."

"Enough! indeed it is not. From what you know of me do you think it likely that that will be enough?" He was now standing in front of her, between her and the gate, and she made no effort to leave him.

"And what is it you want? I suppose you do not mean to fight Lord Ongar, and that if you did you would not come to me."

"Fight him! No; I have no quarrel with him. Fighting him would do no good."

"None in the least; and he would not fight if you were to ask him; and you could not ask him without being false to me."

"I should have had an example for that, at any rate."

"That's nonsense, Mr. Clavering. My falsehood, if you should choose to call me false, is of a very different nature, and is pardonable by all laws known in the world."

"You are a jilt,—that is all."

"Come, Harry, don't use hard words," and she put her hand kindly upon his arm. "Look at me, such as I am, and at yourself, and then say whether anything but misery could come of a match between you and me. Our ages by the register are the same, but I am ten years older than you by the world. I have two hundred a year, and I owe at this moment

six hundred pounds. You have, perhaps, double as much, and would lose half of that if you married. You are an usher at a school."

"No, madam, I am not an usher at a school."

"Well, well, you know I don't mean to make you angry."

"At the present moment, I am a schoolmaster, and if I remained so, I might fairly look forward to a liberal income. But I am going to give that up."

"You will not be more fit for matrimony because you are going to give up your profession. Now Lord Ongar has—heaven knows what;—perhaps sixty thousand a year."

"In all my life I never heard such effrontery,—such barefaced shameless worldliness."

"Why should I not love a man with a large income?"

"He is old enough to be your father."

"He is thirty-six, and I am twenty-four."

"Thirty-six!"

"There is the Peerage for you to look at. But, my dear Harry, do you not know that you are perplexing me and yourself too, for nothing? I was fool enough when I came here from Nice, after papa's death, to let you talk nonsense to me for a month or two."

"Did you or did you not swear that you loved me?"

"Oh, Mr. Clavering, I did not imagine that your strength would have condescended to take such advantage over the weakness of a woman. I remember no oaths of any kind, and what foolish assertions I may have made, I am not going to repeat. It must have become manifest to you during these two years that all that was a romance. If it be a pleasure to you to look back to it, of that pleasure I cannot deprive you. Perhaps I also may sometimes look back. But I shall never speak of that time again; and you, if you are as noble as I take you to be, will not speak of it either. I know you would not wish to injure me."

"I would wish to save you from the misery you are bringing on yourself."

"In that you must allow me to look after myself. Lord Ongar certainly wants a wife, and I intend to be true to him,—and useful."

"How about love?"

"And to love him, sir. Do you think that no man can win a woman's love, unless he is filled to the brim with poetry, and has a neck like Lord Byron, and is handsome like your worship? You are very handsome, Harry, and you, too, should go into the market and make the best of yourself. Why should you not learn to love some nice girl that has money to assist you?"

"Julia!"

"No, sir; I will not be called Julia. If you do, I will be insulted, and leave you instantly. I may call you Harry, as being so much younger,—though we were born in the same month, and as a sort of cousin. But I shall never do that after to-day."

"You have courage enough, then, to tell me that you have not ill-used me?"

"Certainly I have. Why, what a fool you would have me be! Look at me, and tell me whether I am fit to be the wife of such a one as you. By the time you are entering the world, I shall be an old woman, and shall have lived my life. Even if I were fit to be your mate when we were living here together, am I fit, after what I have done and seen during the last two years? Do you think it would really do any good to any one if I were to jilt, as you call it, Lord Ongar, and tell them all,—your cousin, Sir Hugh, and my sister, and your father,—that I was going to keep myself up, and marry you when you were ready for me?"

"You mean to say that the evil is done."

"No, indeed. At the present moment I owe six hundred pounds, and I don't know where to turn for it, so that my husband may not be dunned for my debts as soon as he has married me. What a wife I should have been for you;—should I not?"

"I could pay the six hundred pounds for you with money that I have earned myself, though you do call me an usher; and perhaps would ask fewer questions about it than Lord Ongar will do with all his thousands."

"Dear Harry, I beg your pardon about the usher. Of course, I know that you are a fellow of your college, and that St. Cuthbert's, where you teach the boys, is one of the grandest schools in England; and I hope you'll be a bishop; nay,—I think you will, if you make up your mind to try for it."

"I have given up all idea of going into the church."

"Then you'll be a judge. I know you'll be great and distinguished, and that you'll do it all yourself. You are distinguished already. If you could only know how infinitely I should prefer your lot to mine! Oh, Harry, I envy you! I do envy you! You have got the ball at your feet, and the world before you, and can win everything for yourself."

"But nothing is anything without your love."

"Psha! Love, indeed. What could I do for you but ruin you? You know it as well as I do; but you are selfish enough to wish to continue a romance which would be absolutely destructive to me, though for a while it might afford a pleasant relaxation to your graver studies. Harry, you can choose in the world. You have divinity, and law, and literature, and art. And if debarred from love now by the exigencies of labour, you will be as fit for love in ten years' time as you are at present."

"But I do love now."

"Be a man, then, and keep it to yourself. Love is not to be our master. You can choose, as I say; but I have had no choice,—no choice but to be married well, or to go out like a snuff of a candle. I don't like the snuff of a candle, and, therefore, I am going to be married well."

"And that suffices?"

"It must suffice. And why should it not suffice? You are very uncivil, cousin, and very unlike the rest of the world. Everybody com-



pliments me on my marriage. Lord Ongar is not only rich, but he is a man of fashion, and a man of talent."

"Are you fond of race-horses yourself?"

"Very fond of them."

"And of that kind of life?"

"Very fond of it. I mean to be fond of everything that Lord Ongar likes. I know that I can't change him, and, therefore, I shall not try."

"You are right there, Miss Brabazon."

"You mean to be impertinent, sir; but I will not take it so. This is to be our last meeting in private, and I won't acknowledge that I am insulted. But it must be over now, Harry; and here I have been pacing round and round the garden with you, in spite of my refusal just now. It must not be repeated, or things will be said which I do not mean to have ever said of me. Good-by, Harry."

"Good-by, Julia."

"Well, for that once let it pass. And remember this; I have told you all my hopes, and my one trouble. I have been thus open with you because I thought it might serve to make you look at things in a right light. I trust to your honour as a gentleman to repeat nothing that I have said to you."

"I am not given to repeat such things as those."

"I'm sure you are not. And I hope you will not misunderstand the spirit in which they have been spoken. I shall never regret what I have told you now, if it tends to make you perceive that we must both regard our past acquaintance as a romance, which must, from the stern necessity of things, be treated as a dream which we have dreamt, or a poem which we have read."

"You can treat it as you please."

"God bless you, Harry; and I will always hope for your welfare, and hear of your success with joy. Will you come up and shoot with them on Thursday?"

"What, with Hugh? No; Hugh and I do not hit it off together. If I shot at Clavering I should have to do it as a sort of head-keeper. It's a higher position, I know, than that of an usher, but it doesn't suit me."

"Oh, Harry! that is so cruel! But you will come up to the house. Lord Ongar will be there on the thirty-first; the day after to-morrow, you know."

"I must decline even that temptation. I never go into the house when Hugh is there, except about twice a year on solemn invitation—just to prevent there being a family quarrel."

"Good-by, then," and she offered him her hand.

"Good-by, if it must be so."

"I don't know whether you mean to grace my marriage?"

"Certainly not. I shall be away from Clavering, so that the marriage bells may not wound my ears. For the matter of that, I shall be at the school."

"I suppose we shall meet some day in town."

"Most probably not. My ways and Lord Ongar's will be altogether different, even if I should succeed in getting up to London. If you ever come to see Hermione here, I may chance to meet you in the house. But you will not do that often, the place is so dull and unattractive."

"It is the dearest old park."

"You won't care much for old parks as Lady Ongar."

"You don't know what I may care about as Lady Ongar; but as Julia Brabazon I will now say good-by for the last time." Then they parted, and the lady returned to the great house, while Harry Clavering made his way across the park towards the rectory.

Three years before this scene in the gardens at Clavering Park, Lord Brabazon had died at Nice, leaving one unmarried daughter, the lady to whom the reader has just been introduced. One other daughter he had, who was then already married to Sir Hugh Clavering, and Lady Clavering was the Hermione of whom mention has already been made. Lord Brabazon, whose peerage had descended to him in a direct line from the times of the Plantagenets, was one of those unfortunate nobles of whom England is burdened with but few, who have no means equal to their rank. He had married late in life, and had died without a male heir. The title which had come from the Plantagenets was now lapsed; and when the last lord died, about four hundred a year was divided between his two daughters. The elder had already made an excellent match, as regarded fortune, in marrying Sir Hugh Clavering; and the younger was now about to make a much more splendid match in her alliance with Lord Ongar. Of them I do not know that it is necessary to say much more at present.

And of Harry Clavering it perhaps may not be necessary to say much in the way of description. The attentive reader will have already gathered nearly all that should be known of him before he makes himself known by his own deeds. He was the only son of the Reverend Henry Clavering, rector of Clavering, uncle of the present Sir Hugh Clavering, and brother of the last Sir Hugh. The Reverend Henry Clavering, and Mrs. Clavering his wife, and his two daughters, Mary and Fanny Clavering, lived always at Clavering Rectory, on the outskirts of Clavering Park, at a full mile's distance from the house. The church stood in the park, about midway between the two residences. When I have named one more Clavering, Captain Clavering, Captain Archibald Clavering, Sir Hugh's brother, and when I shall have said also that both Sir Hugh and Captain Clavering were men fond of pleasure and fond of money, I shall have said all that I need now say about the Clavering family at large.

Julia Brabazon had indulged in some reminiscence of the romance of her past poetic life when she talked of cousinship between her and Harry Clavering. Her sister was the wife of Harry Clavering's first cousin, but between her and Harry there was no relationship whatever. When old Lord Brabazon had died at Nice she had come to Clavering Park, and had

created some astonishment among those who knew Sir Hugh by making good her footing in his establishment. He was not the man to take up a wife's sister, and make his house her home, out of charity or from domestic love. Lady Clavering, who had been a handsome woman and fashionable withal, no doubt may have had some influence; but Sir Hugh was a man much prone to follow his own courses. It must be presumed that Julia Brabazon had made herself agreeable in the house, and probably also useful. She had been taken to London through two seasons, and had there held up her head among the bravest. And she had been taken abroad,—for Sir Hugh did not love Clavering Park, except during six weeks of partridge shooting; and she had been at Newmarket with them, and at the house of a certain fast hunting duke with whom Sir Hugh was intimate; and at Brighton with her sister, when it suited Sir Hugh to remain alone at the duke's; and then again up in London, where she finally arranged matters with Lord Ongar. It was acknowledged by all the friends of the two families, and indeed I may say of the three families now—among the Brabazon people, and the Clavering people, and the Courton people,—Lord Ongar's family name was Courton,—that Julia Brabazon had been very clever. Of her and Harry Clavering together no one had ever said a word. If any words had been spoken between her and Hermione on the subject, the two sisters had been discreet enough to manage that they should go no further. In those short months of Julia's romance Sir Hugh had been away from Clavering, and Hermione had been much occupied in giving birth to an heir. Julia had now lived past her one short spell of poetry, had written her one sonnet, and was prepared for the business of the world.

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CHAPTER II.

## HARRY CLAVERING CHOOSES HIS PROFESSION.

HARRY CLAVERING might not be an usher, but, nevertheless, he was home for the holidays. And who can say where the usher ends and the school-master begins? He, perhaps, may properly be called an usher, who is hired by a private schoolmaster to assist himself in his private occupation, whereas Harry Clavering had been selected by a public body out of a hundred candidates, with much real or pretended reference to certificates of qualification. He was certainly not an usher, as he was paid three hundred a year for his work,—which is quite beyond the mark of ushers. So much was certain; but yet the word stuck in his throat and made him uncomfortable. He did not like to reflect that he was home for the holidays.

But he had determined that he would never come home for the holidays again. At Christmas he would leave the school at which he had won his appointment with so much trouble, and go into an open profession. Indeed he had chosen his profession, and his mode of entering it. He would become a civil engineer, and perhaps a land surveyor, and with

this view he would enter himself as a pupil in the great house of Beilby and Burton. The terms even had been settled. He was to pay a premium of five hundred pounds and join Mr. Burton, who was settled in the town of Stratton, for twelve months before he placed himself in Mr. Beilby's office in London. Stratton was less than twenty miles from Clavering. It was a comfort to him to think that he could pay this five hundred pounds out of his own earnings, without troubling his father. It was a comfort, even though he had earned that money by "ushering" for the last two years.

When he left Julia Brabazon in the garden, Harry Clavering did not go at once home to the rectory, but sauntered out all alone into the park, intending to indulge in reminiscences of his past romance. It was all over, that idea of having Julia Brabazon for his love; and now he had to ask himself whether he intended to be made permanently miserable by her worldly falseness, or whether he would borrow something of her worldly wisdom, and agree with himself to look back on what was past as a pleasurable excitement in his boyhood. Of course we all know that really permanent misery was in truth out of the question. Nature had not made him physically or mentally so poor a creature as to be incapable of a cure. But on this occasion he decided on permanent misery. There was about his heart,—about his actual anatomical heart, with its internal arrangement of valves and blood-vessels,—a heavy dragging feel that almost amounted to corporeal pain, and which he described to himself as agony. Why should this rich, debauched, disreputable lord have the power of taking the cup from his lip, the one morsel of bread which he coveted from his mouth, his one ingot of treasure out of his coffer? Fight him! No, he knew he could not fight Lord Ongar. The world was against such an arrangement. And in truth Harry Clavering had so much contempt for Lord Ongar, that he had no wish to fight so poor a creature. The man had had delirium tremens, and was a worn-out miserable object. So at least Harry Clavering was only too ready to believe. He did not care much for Lord Ongar in the matter. His anger was against her;—that she should have deserted him for a miserable creature, who had nothing to back him but wealth and rank!

There was wretchedness in every view of the matter. He loved her so well, and yet he could do nothing! He could take no step towards saving her or assisting himself. The marriage bells would ring within a month from the present time, and his own father would go to the church and marry them. Unless Lord Ongar were to die before then by God's hand, there could be no escape,—and of such escape Harry Clavering had no thought. He felt a weary, dragging soreness at his heart, and told himself that he must be miserable for ever,—not so miserable but what he would work, but so wretched that the world could have for him no satisfaction.

What could he do? What thing could he achieve so that she should know that he did not let her go from him without more thought than his poor words had expressed? He was perfectly aware that in their con-

versation she had had the best of the argument,—that he had talked almost like a boy, while she had talked quite like a woman. She had treated him *de haut en bas* with all that superiority which youth and beauty give to a young woman over a very young man. What could he do? Before he returned to the rectory, he had made up his mind what he would do, and on the following morning Julia Brabazon received by the hands of her maid the following note:—

“I think I understood all that you said to me yesterday. At any rate, I understand that you have one trouble left, and that I have the means of curing it.” In the first draft of his letter he said something about ushering, but that he omitted afterwards. “You may be assured that the enclosed is all my own, and that it is entirely at my own disposal. You may also be quite sure of good faith on the part of the lender.—H. C.” And in this letter he enclosed a cheque for six hundred pounds. It was the money which he had saved since he took his degree, and had been intended for Messrs. Beilby and Burton. But he would wait another two years,—continuing to do his ushering for her sake. What did it matter to a man who must, under any circumstances, be permanently miserable?

Sir Hugh was not yet at Clavering. He was to come with Lord Ongar on the eve of the partridge-shooting. The two sisters, therefore, had the house all to themselves. At about twelve they sat down to breakfast together in a little upstairs chamber adjoining Lady Clavering’s own room, Julia Brabazon at that time having her lover’s generous letter in her pocket. She knew that it was as improper as it was generous, and that, moreover, it was very dangerous. There was no knowing what might be the result of such a letter should Lord Ongar even know that she had received it. She was not absolutely angry with Harry, but had, to herself, twenty times called him a foolish, indiscreet, dear generous boy. But what was she to do with the cheque? As to that, she had hardly as yet made up her mind when she joined her sister on the morning in question. Even to Hermione she did not dare to tell the fact that such a letter had been received by her.

But in truth her debts were a great torment to her; and yet how trifling they were when compared with the wealth of the man who was to become her husband in six weeks! Let her marry him, and not pay them, and he probably would never be the wiser. They would get themselves paid almost without his knowledge, perhaps altogether without his hearing of them. But yet she feared him, knowing him to be greedy about money; and, to give her such merit as was due to her, she felt the meanness of going to her husband with debts on her shoulder. She had five thousand pounds of her own; but the very settlement which gave her a noble dower, and which made the marriage so brilliant, made over this small sum in its entirety to her lord. She had been wrong not to tell the lawyer of her trouble when he had brought the paper for her to sign; but she had not told him. If Sir Hugh Clavering had been her own brother there would have been no difficulty, but he was only her brother-in-law, and she feared to speak to him. Her sister, however,

knew that there were debts, and on that subject she was not afraid to speak to Hermione.

"Hermey," said she, "what am I to do about this money that I owe? I got a bill from Colclugh's this morning."

"Just because he knows you're going to be married; that's all."

"But how am I to pay him?"

"Take no notice of it till next spring. I don't know what else you can do. You'll be sure to have money when you come back from the Continent."

"You couldn't lend it me; could you?"

"Who? I? Did you ever know me have any money in hand since I was married? I have the name of an allowance, but it is always spent before it comes to me, and I am always in debt."

"Would Hugh—let me have it?"

"What, give it you?"

"Well, it wouldn't be so very much for him. I never asked him for a pound yet."

"I think he would say something you wouldn't like if you were to ask him; but, of course, you can try it if you please."

"Then what am I to do?"

"Lord Ongar should have let you keep your own fortune. It would have been nothing to him."

"Hugh didn't let you keep your own fortune."

"But the money which will be nothing to Lord Ongar was a good deal to Hugh. You're going to have sixty thousand a year, while we have to do with seven or eight. Besides, I hadn't been out in London, and it wasn't likely I should owe much in Nice. He did ask me, and there was something."

"What am I to do, Hermey?"

"Write and ask Lord Ongar to let you have what you want out of your own money. Write to-day, so that he may get your letter before he comes."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! I never wrote a word to him yet, and to begin with asking him for money!"

"I don't think he can be angry with you for that."

"I shouldn't know what to say. Would you write it for me, and let me see how it looks?"

This Lady Clavering did; and had she refused to do it, I think that poor Harry Clavering's cheque would have been used. As it was, Lady Clavering wrote the letter to "My dear Lord Ongar," and it was copied and signed by "Yours most affectionately, Julia Brabazon." The effect of this was the receipt of a cheque for a thousand pounds in a very pretty note from Lord Ongar, which the lord brought with him to Clavering, and sent up to Julia as he was dressing for dinner. It was an extremely comfortable arrangement, and Julia was very glad of the money,—feeling it to be a portion of that which was her own. And Harry's cheque had



been returned to him on the day of its receipt. "Of course I cannot take it, and of course you should not have sent it." These words were written on the morsel of paper in which the money was returned. But Miss Brabazon had torn the signature off the cheque, so that it might be safe, whereas Harry Clavering had taken no precaution with it whatever. But then Harry Clavering had not lived two years in London.

During the hours that the cheque was away from him, Harry had told his father that perhaps, even yet, he might change his purpose as to going to Messrs. Beilby and Burton. He did not know, he said, but he was still in doubt. This had sprung from some chance question which his father had asked, and which had seemed to demand an answer. Mr. Clavering greatly disliked the scheme of life which his son had made. Harry's life hitherto had been prosperous and very creditable. He had gone early to Cambridge, and at twenty-two had become a fellow of his college. This fellowship he could hold for five or six years without going into orders. It would then lead to a living, and would in the meantime afford a livelihood. But, beyond this, Harry, with an energy which he certainly had not inherited from his father, had become a schoolmaster, and was already a rich man. He had done more than well, and there was a great probability that between them they might be able to buy the next presentation to Clavering, when the time should come in which Sir Hugh should determine on selling it. That Sir Hugh should give the family living to his cousin was never thought probable by any of the family at the rectory; but he might perhaps part with it under such circumstances on favourable terms. For all these reasons the father was very anxious that his son should follow out the course for which he had been intended; but that he, being unenergetic and having hitherto done little for his son, should dictate to a young man who had been energetic, and who had done much for himself, was out of the question. Harry, therefore, was to be the arbiter of his own fate. But when Harry received back the cheque from Julia Brabazon, then he again returned to his resolution respecting Messrs. Beilby and Burton, and took the first opportunity of telling his father that such was the case.

After breakfast he followed his father into his study, and there, sitting in two easy-chairs opposite to each other, they lit each a cigar. Such was the reverend gentleman's custom in the afternoon, and such also in the morning. I do not know whether the smoking of four or five cigars daily by the parson of a parish may now-a-days be considered as a vice in him, but if so, it was the only vice with which Mr. Clavering could be charged. He was a kind, soft-hearted, gracious man, tender to his wife, whom he ever regarded as the angel of his house, indulgent to his daughters, whom he idolized, ever patient with his parishioners, and awake,—though not widely awake,—to the responsibilities of his calling. The world had been too comfortable for him, and also too narrow; so that he had sunk into idleness. The world had given him much to eat and drink, but it had given him little to do, and thus he had gradually fallen



away from his early purposes, till his energy hardly sufficed for the doing of that little. His living gave him eight hundred a year; his wife's fortune nearly doubled that. He had married early, and had got his living early, and had been very prosperous. But he was not a happy man. He knew that he had put off the day of action till the power of action had passed away from him. His library was well furnished, but he rarely read much else than novels and poetry; and of late years the reading even of poetry had given way to the reading of novels. Till within ten years of the hour of which I speak, he had been a hunting parson,—not hunting loudly, but following his sport as it is followed by moderate sportsmen. Then there had come a new bishop, and the new bishop had sent for him,—nay, finally had come to him, and had lectured him with blatant authority. "My lord," said the parson of Clavering, plucking up something of his past energy, as the colour rose to his face, "I think you are wrong in this. I think you are specially wrong to interfere with me in this way on your first coming among us. You feel it to be your duty, no doubt; but to me it seems that you mistake your duty. But, as the matter is one simply of my own pleasure, I shall give it up." After that Mr. Clavering hunted no more, and never spoke a good word to any one of the bishop of his diocese. For myself, I think it as well that clergymen should not hunt; but had I been the parson of Clavering, I should, under those circumstances, have hunted double.

Mr. Clavering hunted no more, and probably smoked a greater number of cigars in consequence. He had an increased amount of time at his disposal, but did not, therefore, give more time to his duties. Alas! what time did he give to his duties? He kept a most energetic curate, whom he allowed to do almost what he would with the parish. Every-day services he did prohibit, declaring that he would not have the parish church made ridiculous; but in other respects his curate was the pastor. Once every Sunday he read the service, and once every Sunday he preached, and he resided in his parsonage ten months every year. His wife and daughters went among the poor,—and he smoked cigars in his library. Though not yet fifty, he was becoming fat and idle,—unwilling to walk, and not caring much even for such riding as the bishop had left to him. And, to make matters worse,—far worse, he knew all this of himself, and understood it thoroughly. "I see a better path, and know how good it is, but I follow ever the worse." He was saying that to himself daily, and was saying it always without hope.

And his wife had given him up. She had given him up, not with disdainful rejection, nor with contempt in her eye, or censure in her voice, not with diminution of love or of outward respect. She had given him up as a man abandons his attempts to make his favourite dog take the water. He would fain that the dog he loves should dash into the stream as other dogs will do. It is, to his thinking, a noble instinct in a dog. But his dog dreads the water. As, however, he has learned to love the beast, he puts up with this mischance, and never dreams of banishing

poor Ponto from his hearth because of this failure. And so it was with Mrs. Clavering and her husband at the rectory. He understood it all. He knew that he was so far rejected; and he acknowledged to himself the necessity for such rejection.

"It is a very serious thing to decide upon," he said, when his son had spoken to him.

"Yes; it is serious,—about as serious a thing as a man can think of; but a man cannot put it off on that account. If I mean to make such a change in my plans, the sooner I do it the better."

"But yesterday you were in another mind."

"No, father, not in another mind. I did not tell you then, nor can I tell you all now. I had thought that I should want my money for another purpose for a year or two; but that I have abandoned."

"Is the purpose a secret, Harry?"

"It is a secret, because it concerns another person."

"You were going to lend your money to some one?"

"I must keep it a secret, though you know I seldom have any secrets from you. That idea, however, is abandoned, and I mean to go over to Stratton to-morrow, and tell Mr. Burton that I shall be there after Christmas. I must be at St. Cuthbert's on Tuesday."

Then they both sat silent for a while, silently blowing out their clouds of smoke. The son had said all that he cared to say, and would have wished that there might then be an end of it; but he knew that his father had much on his mind, and would fain express, if he could express it without too much trouble, or without too evident a need of self-reproach, his own thoughts on the subject. "You have made up your mind, then, altogether that you do not like the church as a profession," he said at last.

"I think I have, father."

"And on what grounds? The grounds which recommend it to you are very strong. Your education has adapted you for it. Your success in it is already ensured by your fellowship. In a great degree you have entered it as a profession already, by taking a fellowship. What you are doing is not choosing a line in life, but changing one already chosen. You are making of yourself a rolling stone."

"A stone should roll till it has come to the spot that suits it."

"Why not give up the school if it irks you?"

"And become a Cambridge Don, and practise deportment among the undergraduates."

"I don't see that you need do that. You need not even live at Cambridge. Take a church in London. You would be sure to get one by holding up your hand. If that, with your fellowship, is not sufficient, I will give you what more you want."

"No, father—no. By God's blessing I will never ask you for a pound. I can hold my fellowship for four years longer without orders, and in four years' time I think I can earn my bread."

"I don't doubt that, Harry."

"Then why should I not follow my wishes in this matter? The truth is, I do not feel myself qualified to be a good clergyman."

"It is not that you have doubts, is it?"

"I might have them if I came to think much about it,—as I must do if I took orders. And I do not wish to be crippled in doing what I think lawful by conventional rules. A rebellious clergyman is, I think, a sorry object. It seems to me that he is a bird fouling his own nest. Now, I know I should be a rebellious clergyman."

"In our church the life of a clergyman is as the life of any other gentleman,—within very broad limits."

"Then why did Bishop Proudie interfere with your hunting?"

"Limits may be very broad, Harry, and yet exclude hunting. Bishop Proudie was vulgar and intrusive, such being the nature of his wife, who instructs him; but if you were in orders I should be very sorry to see you take to hunting."

"It seems to me that a clergyman has nothing to do in life unless he is always preaching and teaching. Look at Saul,"—Mr. Saul was the curate of Clavering—"he is always preaching and teaching. He is doing the best he can; and what a life of it he has. He has literally thrown off all worldly cares,—and consequently everybody laughs at him, and nobody loves him. I don't believe a better man breathes, but I shouldn't like his life."

At this point there was another pause, which lasted till the cigars had come to an end. Then, as he threw the stump into the fire, Mr. Clavering spoke again. "The truth is, Harry, that you have had, all your life, a bad example before you."

"No, father."

"Yes, my son;—let me speak on to the end, and then you can say what you please. In me you have had a bad example on one side, and now, in poor Saul, you have a bad example on the other side. Can you fancy no life between the two, which would fit your physical nature which is larger than his, and your mental wants which are higher than mine? Yes, they are, Harry. It is my duty to say this, but it would be unseemly that there should be any controversy between us on the subject."

"If you choose to stop me in that way ——"

"I do choose to stop you in that way. As for Saul, it is impossible that you should become such a man as he. It is not that he mortifies his flesh, but that he has no flesh to mortify. He is unconscious of the flavour of venison, or the scent of roses, or the beauty of women. He is an exceptional specimen of a man, and you need no more fear, than you should venture to hope, that you could become such as he is."

At this point they were interrupted by the entrance of Fanny Clavering, who came to say that Mr. Saul was in the drawing-room. "What does he want, Fanny?" This question Mr. Clavering asked half in a whisper, but with something of comic humour in his face, as though partly afraid that Mr. Saul should hear it, and partly intending to convey a wish that he might escape Mr. Saul, if it were possible.

"It's about the iron church, papa. He says it is come,—or part of it has come,—and he wants you to go out to Cumberly Green about the site."

"I thought that was all settled."

"He says not."

"What does it matter where it is? He can put it anywhere he likes on the Green. However, I had better go to him." So Mr. Clavering went. Cumberly Green was a hamlet in the parish of Clavering, three miles distant from the church, the people of which had got into a wicked habit of going to a dissenting chapel near to them. By Mr. Saul's energy, but chiefly out of Mr. Clavering's purse, an iron chapel had been purchased for a hundred and fifty pounds, and Mr. Saul proposed to add to his own duties the pleasing occupation of walking to Cumberly Green every Sunday morning before breakfast, and every Wednesday evening after dinner, to perform a service and bring back to the true flock as many of the erring sheep of Cumberly Green as he might be able to catch. Towards the purchase of this iron church Mr. Clavering had at first given a hundred pounds. Sir Hugh, in answer to the fifth application, had very ungraciously, through his steward, bestowed ten pounds. Among the farmers one pound nine and eightpence had been collected. Mr. Saul had given two pounds; Mrs. Clavering gave five pounds; the girls gave ten shillings each; Henry Clavering gave five pounds;—and then the parson made up the remainder. But Mr. Saul had journeyed thrice painfully to Bristol, making the bargain for the church, going and coming each time by third-class, and he had written all the letters; but Mrs. Clavering had paid the postage, and she and the girls between them were making the covering for the little altar.

"Is it all settled, Harry?" said Fanny, stopping with her brother, and hanging over his chair. She was a pretty, gay-spirited girl, with bright eyes and dark brown hair, which fell in two curls behind her ears.

"He has said nothing to unsettle it."

"I know it makes him very unhappy."

"No, Fanny, not very unhappy. He would rather that I should go into the church, but that is about all."

"I think you are quite right."

"And Mary thinks I am quite wrong."

"Mary thinks so, of course. So should I too, perhaps, if I were engaged to a clergyman. That's the old story of the fox who had lost his tail."

"And your tail isn't gone yet?"

"No, my tail isn't gone yet. Mary thinks that no life is like a clergyman's life. But, Harry, though mamma hasn't said so, I'm sure she thinks you are right. She won't say so as long as it may seem to interfere with anything papa may choose to say; but I'm sure she's glad in her heart."

"And I am glad in my heart, Fanny. And as I'm the person most

concerned, I suppose that's the most material thing." Then they followed their father into the drawing-room.

"Couldn't you drive Mrs. Clavering over in the pony chair, and settle it between you," said Mr. Clavering to his curate. Mr. Saul looked disappointed. In the first place, he hated driving the pony, which was a rapid-footed little beast, that had a will of his own; and in the next place, he thought the rector ought to visit the spot on such an occasion. "Or Mrs. Clavering will drive you," said the rector, remembering Mr. Saul's objection to the pony. Still Mr. Saul looked unhappy. Mr. Saul was very tall and very thin, with a tall thin head, and weak eyes, and a sharp, well-cut nose, and, so to say, no lips, and very white teeth, with no beard, and a well-cut chin. His face was so thin that his cheekbones obtruded themselves unpleasantly. He wore a long rusty black coat, and a high rusty black waistcoat, and trousers that were brown with dirty roads and general ill-usage. Nevertheless, it never occurred to any one that Mr. Saul did not look like a gentleman, not even to himself, to whom no ideas whatever on that subject ever presented themselves. But that he was a gentleman I think he knew well enough, and was able to carry himself before Sir Hugh and his wife with quite as much ease as he could do in the rectory. Once or twice he had dined at the great house; but Lady Clavering had declared him to be a bore, and Sir Hugh had called him "that most offensive of all animals, a clerical prig." It had therefore been decided that he was not to be asked to the great house any more. It may be as well to state here, as elsewhere, that Mr. Clavering very rarely went to his nephew's table. On certain occasions he did do so, so that there might be no recognized quarrel between him and Sir Hugh; but such visits were few and far between.

After a few more words from Mr. Saul, and a glance from his wife's eye, Mr. Clavering consented to go to Cumberly Green, though there was nothing he liked so little as a morning spent with his curate. When he had started, Harry told his mother also of his final decision. I shall go to Stratton to-morrow and settle it all."

"And what does papa say?" asked the mother.

"Just what he has said before. It is not so much that he wishes me to be a clergyman, as that he does not wish me to have lost all my time up to this."

"It is more than that, I think, Harry," said his elder sister, a tall girl, less pretty than her sister, apparently less careful of her prettiness, very quiet, or, as some said, demure, but known to be good as gold by all who knew her well.

"I doubt it," said Harry, stoutly. "But, however that may be, a man must choose for himself."

"We all thought you had chosen," said Mary.

"If it is settled," said the mother, "I suppose we shall do no good by opposing it."

"Would you wish to oppose it, mamma?" said Harry.

"No, my dear. I think you should judge for yourself."

"You see I could have no scope in the church for that sort of ambition which would satisfy me. Look at such men as Locke, and Stephenson, and Brassey. They are the men who seem to me to do most in the world. They were all self-educated, but surely a man can't have a worse chance because he has learned something. Look at old Beilby with a seat in Parliament, and a property worth two or three hundred thousand pounds! When he was my age he had nothing but his weekly wages."

"I don't know whether Mr. Beilby is a very happy man or a very good man," said Mary.

"I don't know, either," said Harry; "but I do know that he has thrown a single arch over a wider span of water than ever was done before, and that ought to make him happy." After saying this in a tone of high authority, befitting his dignity as a fellow of his college, Harry Clavering went out, leaving his mother and sisters to discuss the subject which to two of them was all-important. As to Mary, she had hopes of her own, vested in the clerical concerns of a neighbouring parish.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### LORD ONGAR.

ON the next morning Harry Clavering rode over to Stratton, thinking much of his misery as he went. It was all very well for him, in the presence of his own family to talk of his profession as the one subject which was to him of any importance; but he knew very well himself that he was only beguiling them in doing so. This question of a profession was, after all, but dead leaves to him,—to him who had a canker at his heart, a perpetual thorn in his bosom, a misery within him which no profession could mitigate! Those dear ones at home guessed nothing of this, and he would take care that they should guess nothing. Why should they have the pain of knowing that he had been made wretched for ever by blighted hopes? His mother, indeed, had suspected something in those sweet days of his roaming with Julia through the park. She had once or twice said a word to warn him. But of the very truth of his deep love,—so he told himself,—she had been happily ignorant. Let her be ignorant. Why should he make his mother unhappy? As these thoughts passed through his mind, I think that he revelled in his wretchedness, and made much to himself of his misery. He sucked in his sorrow greedily, and was somewhat proud to have had occasion to break his heart. But not the less, because he was thus early blighted, would he struggle for success in the world. He would show her that, as his wife, she might have had a worthier position than Lord Ongar could give her. He, too, might probably rise the quicker in the world, as now he would have no impediment of wife or family. Then, as he rode along, he composed a sonnet,

fitting to his case, the strength and rhythm of which seemed to him, as he sat on horseback, to be almost perfect. Unfortunately, when he was back at Clavering, and sat in his room with the pen in his hand, the turn of the words had escaped him.

He found Mr. Burton at home, and was not long in concluding his business. Messrs. Beilby and Burton were not only civil engineers, but were land surveyors also, and land valuers on a great scale. They were employed much by Government upon public buildings, and if not architects themselves, were supposed to know all that architects should do and should not do. In the purchase of great properties Mr. Burton's opinion was supposed to be, or to have been, as good as any in the kingdom, and therefore there was very much to be learned in the office at Stratton. But Mr. Burton was not a rich man like his partner, Mr. Beilby, nor an ambitious man. He had never soared Parliamentwards, had never speculated, had never invented, and never been great. He had been the father of a very large family, all of whom were doing as well in the world, and some of them perhaps better, than their father. Indeed, there were many who said that Mr. Burton would have been a richer man if he had not joined himself in partnership with Mr. Beilby. Mr. Beilby had the reputation of swallowing more than his share wherever he went.

When the business part of the arrangement was finished Mr. Burton talked to his future pupil about lodgings, and went out with him into the town to look for rooms. The old man found that Harry Clavering was rather nice in this respect, and in his own mind formed an idea that this new beginner might have been a more auspicious pupil, had he not already become a fellow of a college. Indeed, Harry talked to him quite as though they two were on an equality together; and, before they had parted, Mr. Burton was not sure that Harry did not patronize him. He asked the young man, however, to join them at their early dinner, and then introduced him to Mrs. Burton, and to their youngest daughter, the only child who was still living with them. "All my other girls are married, Mr. Clavering; and all of them married to men connected with my own profession." The colour came slightly to Florence Burton's cheeks as she heard her father's words, and Harry asked himself whether the old man expected that he should go through the same ordeal; but Mr. Burton himself was quite unaware that he had said anything wrong, and then went on to speak of the successes of his sons. "But they began early, Mr. Clavering; and worked hard,—very hard indeed." He was a good, kindly, garrulous old man; but Harry began to doubt whether he would learn much at Stratton. It was, however, too late to think of that now, and everything was fixed.

Harry, when he looked at Florence Burton, at once declared to himself that she was plain. Anything more unlike Julia Brabazon never appeared in the guise of a young lady. Julia was tall, with a high brow, a glorious complexion, a nose as finely modelled as though a Grecian sculptor had cut it, a small mouth, but lovely in its curves, and a chin that finished



and made perfect the symmetry of her face. Her neck was long, but graceful as a swan's, her bust was full, and her whole figure like that of a goddess. Added to this, when he had first known her, had been all the charm of youth. When she had returned to Clavering the other day, the affianced bride of Lord Ongar, he had hardly known whether to admire or to deplore the settled air of established womanhood which she had assumed. Her large eyes had always lacked something of rapid glancing sparkling brightness. They had been glorious eyes to him, and in those early days he had not known that they lacked aught; but he had perceived, or perhaps fancied, that now, in her present condition they were often cold, and sometimes almost cruel. Nevertheless he was ready to swear that she was perfect in her beauty.

Poor Florence Burton was short of stature, was brown, meagre, and poor-looking. So said Harry Clavering to himself. Her small hand, though soft, lacked that wondrous charm of touch which Julia's possessed. Her face was short, and her forehead, though it was broad and open, had none of that feminine command which Julia's look conveyed. That Florence's eyes were very bright,—bright and soft as well, he allowed; and her dark brown hair was very glossy; but she was, on the whole, a mean-looking little thing. He could not, as he said to himself on his return home, avoid the comparison, as she was the first girl he had seen since he had parted from Julia Brabazon.

"I hope you'll find yourself comfortable at Stratton, sir," said old Mrs. Burton.

"Thank you," said Harry, "but I want very little myself in that way. Anything does for me."

"One young gentleman we had took a bedroom at Mrs. Pott's, and did very nicely without any second room at all. 'Don't you remember, Mr. B.; it was young Granger.'"

"Young Granger had a very short allowance," said Mr. Burton. "He lived upon fifty pounds a year all the time he was here."

"And I don't think Scarness had more when he began," said Mrs. Burton. "Mr. Scarness married one of my girls, Mr. Clavering, when he started himself at Liverpool. He has pretty nigh all the Liverpool docks under him now. I have heard him say that butcher's meat did not cost him four shillings a week all the time he was here. I've always thought Stratton one of the reasonabest places anywhere for a young man to do for himself in."

"I don't know, my dear," said the husband, "that Mr. Clavering will care very much for that."

"Perhaps not, Mr. B.; but I do like to see young men careful about their spendings. What's the use of spending a shilling when sixpence will do as well; and sixpence saved when a man has nothing but himself, becomes pounds and pounds by the time he has a family about him."

During all this time Miss Burton said little or nothing, and Harry

Clavering himself did not say much. He could not express any intention of rivalling Mr. Scarness's economy in the article of butcher's meat, nor could he promise to content himself with Granger's solitary bedroom. But as he rode home he almost began to fear that he had made a mistake. He was not wedded to the joys of his college hall, or the college common room. He did not like the narrowness of college life. But he doubted whether the change from that to the oft-repeated hospitalities of Mrs. Burton might not be too much for him. Scarness's four shillings'-worth of butcher's meat had already made him half sick of his new profession, and though Stratton might be the "reasonablest place anywhere for a young man," he could not look forward to living there for a year with much delight. As for Miss Burton, it might be quite as well that she was plain, as he wished for none of the delights which beauty affords to young men.

On his return home, however, he made no complaint of Stratton. He was too strong-willed to own that he had been in any way wrong, and when early in the following week he started for St. Cuthbert's, he was able to speak with cheerful hope of his new prospects. If ultimately he should find life in Stratton to be unendurable, he would cut that part of his career short, and contrive to get up to London at an earlier time than he had intended.

On the 31st of August Lord Ongar and Sir Hugh Clavering reached Clavering Park, and, as has been already told, a pretty little note was at once sent up to Miss Brabazon in her bedroom. When she met Lord Ongar in the drawing-room, about an hour afterwards, she had instructed herself that it would be best to say nothing of the note; but she could not refrain from a word. "I am much obliged, my lord, by your kindness and generosity," she said, as she gave him her hand. He merely bowed and smiled, and muttered something as to his hoping that he might always find it as easy to gratify her. He was a little man, on whose behalf it certainly appeared that the Peerage must have told a falsehood; it seemed so at least to those who judged of his years from his appearance. The Peerage said that he was thirty-six, and that, no doubt, was in truth his age, but any one would have declared him to be ten years older. This look was produced chiefly by the effect of an elaborately dressed jet black wig which he wore. What misfortune had made him bald so early,—if to be bald early in life be a misfortune,—I cannot say; but he had lost the hair from the crown of his head, and had preferred wiggery to baldness. No doubt an effort was made to hide the wiggishness of his wigs, but what effect in that direction was ever made successfully? He was, moreover, weak, thin, and physically poor, and had, no doubt, increased this weakness and poorness by hard living. Though others thought him old, time had gone swiftly with him, and he still thought himself a young man. He hunted, though he could not ride. He shot, though he could not walk. And, unfortunately, he drank, though he had no capacity for drinking! His friends at last had taught him to

believe that his only chance of saving himself lay in marriage, and therefore he had engaged himself to Julia Brabazon, purchasing her at the price of a brilliant settlement. If Lord Ongar should die before her, Ongar Park was to be hers for life, with thousands a year to maintain it. Courton Castle, the great family seat, would of course go to the heir; but Ongar Park was supposed to be the most delightful small country-seat anywhere within thirty miles of London. It lay among the Surrey hills, and all the world had heard of the charms of Ongar Park. If Julia were to survive her lord, Ongar Park was to be hers; and they who saw them both together had but little doubt that she would come to the enjoyment of this clause in her settlement. Lady Clavering had been clever in arranging the match; and Sir Hugh, though he might have been unwilling to give his sister-in-law money out of his own pocket, had performed his duty as a brother-in-law in looking to her future welfare. Julia Brabazon had no doubt that she was doing well. Poor Harry Clavering! She had loved him in the days of her romance. She, too, had written her sonnets. But she had grown old earlier in life than he had done, and had taught herself that romance could not be allowed to a woman in her position. She was highly born, the daughter of a peer, without money, and even without a home to which she had any claim. Of course she had accepted Lord Ongar, but she had not put out her hand to take all these good things without resolving that she would do her duty to her future lord. The duty would be doubtless disagreeable, but she would do it with all the more diligence on that account.

September passed by, hecatombs of partridges were slaughtered, and the day of the wedding drew nigh. It was pretty to see Lord Ongar and the self-satisfaction which he enjoyed at this time. The world was becoming young with him again, and he thought that he rather liked the respectability of his present mode of life. He gave himself but scanty allowances of wine, and no allowance of anything stronger than wine, and did not dislike his temperance. There was about him at all hours an air which seemed to say, "There; I told you all that I could do it as soon as there was any necessity." And in these halcyon days he could shoot for an hour without his pony, and he liked the gentle courteous badinage which was bestowed upon his courtship, and he liked also Julia's beauty. Her conduct to him was perfect. She was never pert, never exigent, never romantic, and never humble. She never bored him, and yet was always ready to be with him when he wished it. She was never exalted; and yet she bore her high place as became a woman nobly born and acknowledged to be beautiful.

"I declare you have quite made a lover of him," said Lady Clavering to her sister. When a thought of the match had first arisen in Sir Hugh's London house, Lady Clavering had been eager in praise of Lord Ongar, or eager in praise rather of the position which the future Lady Ongar might hold; but since the prize had been secured, since it had become plain that Julia was to be the greater woman of the two, she had harped

sometimes on the other string. As a sister she had striven for a sister's welfare, but as a woman she could not keep herself from comparisons which might tend to show that after all, well as Julia was doing, she was not doing better than her elder sister had done. Hermione had married simply a baronet, and not the richest or the most amiable among baronets; but she had married a man suitable in age and wealth, with whom any girl might have been in love. She had not sold herself to be the nurse, or not to be the nurse, as it might turn out, of a worn-out debauché. She would have hinted nothing of this, perhaps have thought nothing of this, had not Julia and Lord Ongar walked together through the Clavering groves as though they were two young people. She owed it as a duty to her sister to point out that Lord Ongar could not be a romantic young person, and ought not to be encouraged to play that part.

"I don't know that I have made anything of him," answered Julia. "I suppose he's much like other men when they're going to be married." Julia quite understood the ideas that were passing through her sister's mind, and did not feel them to be unnatural.

"What I mean is, that he has come out so strong in the Romeo line, which we hardly expected, you know. We shall have him under your bedroom window with a guitar like Don Giovanni."

"I hope not, because it's so cold. I don't think it likely, as he seems fond of going to bed early."

"And it's the best thing for him," said Lady Clavering, becoming serious and carefully benevolent. "It's quite a wonder what good hours and quiet living have done for him in so short a time. I was observing him as he walked yesterday, and he put his feet to the ground as firmly almost as Hugh does."

"Did he indeed? I hope he won't have the habit of putting his hand down firmly as Hugh does sometimes."

"As for that," said Lady Clavering, with a little tremor, "I don't think there's much difference between them. They all say that when Lord Ongar means a thing he does mean it."

"I think a man ought to have a way of his own."

"And a woman also, don't you, my dear? But, as I was saying, if Lord Ongar will continue to take care of himself he may become quite a different man. Hugh says that he drinks next to nothing now, and though he sometimes lights a cigar in the smoking-room at night, he hardly ever smokes it. You must do what you can to keep him from tobacco. I happen to know that Sir Charles Poddy said that so many cigars were worse for him even than brandy."

All this Julia bore with an even temper. She was determined to bear everything till her time should come. Indeed she had made herself understand that the hearing of such things as these was a part of the price which she was to be called upon to pay. It was not pleasant for her to hear what Sir Charles Poddy had said about the tobacco and brandy of the man she was just going to marry. She would sooner have

heard of his riding sixty miles a day, or dancing all night, as she might have heard had she been contented to take Harry Clavering. But she had made her selection with her eyes open, and was not disposed to quarrel with her bargain, because that which she had bought was no better than the article which she had known it to be when she was making her purchase. Nor was she even angry with her sister. "I will do the best I can, Hermý; you may be sure of that. But there are some things which it is useless to talk about."

"But it was as well you should know what Sir Charles said."

"I know quite enough of what he says, Hermý,—quite as much, I daresay, as you do. But, never mind. If Lord Ongar has given up smoking, I quite agree with you that it's a good thing. I wish they'd all give it up, for I hate the smell of it. Hugh has got worse and worse. He never cares about changing his clothes now."

"I'll tell you what it is," said Sir Hugh to his wife that night; "sixty thousand a year is a very fine income, but Julia will find she has caught a Tartar."

"I suppose he'll hardly live long; will he?"

"I don't know or care when he lives or when he dies; but, by heaven, he is the most overbearing fellow I ever had in the house with me. I wouldn't stand him here for another fortnight,—not even to make her all safe."

"It will soon be over. They'll be gone on Thursday."

"What do you think of his having the impudence to tell Cunliffe,"—Cunliffe was the head keeper;—"before my face, that he didn't know anything about pheasants! 'Well, my lord, I think we've got a few about the place,' said Cunliffe. 'Very few,' said Ongar, with a sneer. Now, if I haven't a better head of game here than he has at Courton, I'll eat him. But the impudence of his saying that before me!"

"Did you make him any answer?"

"'There's about enough to suit me,' I said. Then he skulked away, knocked off his pins. I shouldn't like to be his wife; I can tell Julia that."

"Julia is very clever," said the sister.

The day of the marriage came, and everything at Clavering was done with much splendour. Four bridesmaids came down from London on the preceding day; two were already staying in the house, and the two cousins came as two more from the rectory. Julia Brabazon had never been really intimate with Mary and Fanny Clavering, but she had known them well enough to make it odd if she did not ask them to come to her wedding and to take a part in the ceremony. And, moreover, she had thought of Harry and her little romance of other days. Harry, perhaps, might be glad to know that she had shown this courtesy to his sisters. Harry, she knew, would be away at his school. Though she had asked him whether he meant to come to her wedding, she had been better pleased that he should be absent. She had not many regrets herself, but

it pleased her to think that he should have them. So Mary and Fanny Clavering were asked to attend her at the altar. Mary and Fanny would both have preferred to decline, but their mother had told them that they could not do so. "It would make ill-feeling," said Mrs. Clavering; "and that is what your papa particularly wishes to avoid."

"When you say papa particularly wishes anything, mamma, you always mean that you wish it particularly yourself," said Fanny. "But if it must be done, it must; and then I shall know how to behave when Mary's time comes."

The bells were rung lustily all the morning, and all the parish was there, round about the church, to see. There was no record of a lord ever having been married in Clavering church before; and now this lord was going to marry my lady's sister. It was all one as though she were a Clavering herself. But there was no ecstatic joy in the parish. There were to be no bonfires, and no eating and drinking at Sir Hugh's expense, —no comforts provided for any of the poor by Lady Clavering on that special occasion. Indeed, there was never much of such kindnesses between the lord of the soil and his dependants. A certain stipulated dole was given at Christmas for coals and blankets; but even for that there was generally some wrangle between the rector and the steward. "If there's to be all this row about it," the rector had said to the steward, "I'll never ask for it again." "I wish my uncle would only be as good as his word," Sir Hugh had said, when the rector's speech was repeated to him. Therefore, there was not much of real rejoicing in the parish on this occasion, though the bells were rung loudly, and though the people, young and old, did cluster round the churchyard to see the lord lead his bride out of the church. "A pair feckless thing, tottering along like,—not half the makings of a man. A stout lass like she could a'most blow him away wi' a puff of her mouth." That was the verdict which an old farmer's wife passed upon him, and that verdict was made good by the general opinion of the parish.

But though the lord might be only half a man, Julia Brabazon walked out from the church every inch a countess. Whatever price she might have paid, she had at any rate got the thing which she had intended to buy. And as she stepped into the chariot which carried her away to the railway station on her way to Dover, she told herself that she had done right. She had chosen her profession, as Harry Clavering had chosen his; and having so far succeeded, she would do her best to make her success perfect. Mercenary! Of course she had been mercenary. Were not all men and women mercenary upon whom devolved the necessity of earning their bread?

Then there was a great breakfast at the park,—for the quality,—and the rector on this occasion submitted himself to become the guest of the nephew whom he thoroughly disliked.



## My Countrymen.

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ABOUT a year ago, the *Saturday Review* published an article which gave me, as its articles often do give me, much food for reflection. The article was about the unjust estimate which, says the *Saturday Review*, I form of my countrymen, and about the indecency of talking of "British Philistines." It appears that I assume the truth of the transcendental system of philosophy, and then lecture my wiser countrymen because they will not join me in recognizing as eternal truths a set of platitudes which may be proved to be false. "Now there is in England a school of philosophy which thoroughly understands, and, on theoretical grounds, deliberately rejects, the philosophical theory which Mr. Arnold accuses the English nation of neglecting; and the practical efforts of the English people, especially their practical efforts in the way of criticism, are for the most part strictly in accordance with the principles of that philosophy."

I do not quite know what to say about the transcendental system of philosophy, for I am a mere dabbler in these great matters, and to grasp and hold a system of philosophy is a feat much beyond my strength; but I certainly did talk about British Philistines, and to call people Philistines when they are doing just what the wisest men in the country have settled to be quite right, does seem unreasonable, not to say indecent. Being really the most teachable man alive, I could not help making, after I had read the article in the *Saturday Review*, a serious return, as the French say, upon myself; and I resolved never to call my countrymen Philistines again till I had thought more about it, and could be quite sure I was not committing an indecency.

I was very much fortified in this good resolution by something else which happened about the same time. Every one knows that the heart of the English nation is its middle class; there had been a good deal of talk, a year ago, about the education of this class, and I, among others, had imagined it was not good, and that the middle class suffered by its not being better. But Mr. Bazley, the Member for Manchester, who is a kind of representative of this class, made a speech last year at Manchester, the middle-class metropolis, which shook me a good deal. "During the last few months," said Mr. Bazley, "there had been a cry that middle-class education ought to receive more attention. He confessed himself very much surprised by the clamour that was raised. He did not think that class need excite the sympathy either of the legislature or the public." Much to the same effect spoke Mr. Miall, another middle-class leader, in the *Nonconformist*: "Middle-class education seems to be the favourite topic of the hour, and we must confess to a feeling of shame



at the nonsense which is being uttered on the subject. It might be thought from what is said, that this section of the community, which has done everything else so well,—which has astonished the world by its energy, enterprise, and self-reliance, which is continually striking out new paths of industry and subduing the forces of nature,—cannot, from some mysterious reason, get their children properly educated." Still more strong were the words of the *Daily News* (I love to range all the evidence in black and white before me, though it tends to my own discomfiture) about the blunder some of us were making: "All the world knows that the great middle class of this country supplies the mind, the will, and the power for all the great and good things that have to be done, and it is not likely that that class should surrender its powers and privileges in the one case of the training of its own children. How the idea of such a scheme can have occurred to anybody, how it can have been imagined that parents and schoolmasters in the most independent, and active, and enlightened class of English society, how it can have been supposed that the class which has done all the great things that have been done in all departments, will beg the Government to send inspectors through its schools, when it can itself command whatever advantages exist, might seem unintelligible but for two or three considerations." These considerations do not much matter just now; but it is clear how perfectly Mr. Bazley's stand was a stand such as it becomes a representative man like Mr. Bazley to make, and how well the *Daily Telegraph* might say of the speech: "It was at once grand, genial, national, and distinct;" and the *Morning Star* of the speaker: "He talked to his constituents as Manchester people like to be talked to, in the language of clear, manly intelligence, which penetrates through sophisms, ignores commonplaces, and gives to conventional illusions their true value. His speech was thoroughly instinct with that earnest good sense which characterizes Manchester, and which, indeed, may be fairly set down as the general characteristic of England and Englishmen everywhere."

Of course if Philistinism is characteristic of the British nation just now, it must in a special way be characteristic of the representative part of the British nation, the part by which the British nation is what it is, and does all its best things, the middle class. And the newspapers, who have so many more means than I of knowing the truth, and who have that trenchant authoritative style for communicating it which makes so great an impression, say that the British middle class is characterized, not by Philistinism, but by enlightenment; by a passion for penetrating through sophisms, ignoring commonplaces, and giving to conventional illusions their true value. Evidently it is nonsense, as the *Daily News* says, to think that this great middle class which supplies the mind, the will, and the power for all the great and good things that have to be done, should want its schools, the nurseries of its admirable intelligence, meddled with. It may easily be imagined that all this, coming on the top of the *Saturday Review's* rebuke of me for indecency, was enough

to set me meditating; and after a long and painful self-examination, I saw that I had been making a great mistake. I had been breaking one of my own cardinal rules: the rule to keep aloof from practice, and to confine myself to the slow and obscure work of trying to understand things, to see them as they are. So I was suffering deservedly in being taunted with hawking about my nostrums of State schools for a class much too wise to want them, and of an Academy for people who have an inimitable style already. To be sure I had said that schools ought to be things of local, not State, institution and management, and that we ought not to have an Academy; but that makes no difference. I had been meddling with practice, proposing this and that, saying how it might be if we had established this or that. I saw what danger I had been running in thus intruding into a sphere where I have no business, and I resolved to offend in this way no more. Henceforward let Mr. Kinglake belabour the French as he will, let him describe as many tight merciless lips as he likes; henceforward let Educational Homes stretch themselves out in *The Times* to the crack of doom, let Lord Fortescue bewitch the middle class with ever new blandishments, let any number of Mansion House meetings propound any number of patchwork schemes to avoid facing the real difficulty; I am dumb. I let reforming and instituting alone; I meddle with my neighbour's practice no more. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

This I say as a sincere penitent; but I do not see that there is any harm in my still trying to know and understand things, if I keep humbly to that, and do not meddle with greater matters, which are out of my reach. So having once got into my head this notion of British Philistinism and of the want of clear and large intelligence in our middle class, I do not consider myself bound at once to put away and crush such a notion, as people are told to do with their religious doubts; nor, when the *Saturday Review* tells me that no nation in the world is so logical as the English nation, and the *Morning Star*, that our grand national characteristic is a clear intelligence which penetrates through sophisms, ignores commonplaces, and gives to conventional illusions their true value, do I feel myself compelled to receive these propositions with absolute submission as articles of faith, transcending reason; indeed, this would be transcendentalism, which the *Saturday Review* condemns. Canvass them, then, as mere matters of speculation, I may; and having lately had occasion to travel on the Continent for many months, during which I was thrown in company with a great variety of people, I remembered what Burns says of the profitability of trying to see ourselves as others see us, and I kept on the watch for anything to confirm or contradict my old notion, in which, without absolutely giving it up, I had begun certainly to be much shaken and staggered.

I must say that the foreign opinion about us is not at all like that of the *Saturday Review* and the *Morning Star*. I know how madly the

foreigners envy us, and that this must warp their judgment; I know, too, that this test of foreign opinion can never be decisive; I only take it for what it is worth, and as a contribution to our study of the matter in question. But I do really think that the admirers of our great middle class, which has, as its friends and enemies both agree, risen into such preponderating importance of late years, and now returns the House of Commons, dictates the policy of Ministers, makes the newspapers speak with its voice, and in short governs the country,—I do think, I say, the admirers of this great class would be astounded if they could hear how cavalierly a foreigner treats this country of their making and managing. "It is not so much that we dislike England," a Prussian official, with the graceful tact of his nation, said to me the other day, "as that we think little of her." The *Cologne Gazette*, perhaps the chief newspaper of Germany, published in the summer a series of letters, much esteemed, I believe, by military men, on the armies of the leading Continental powers. The writer was a German officer, but not a Prussian. Speaking of the false military system followed by the Emperor Nicholas, whose great aim was to turn his soldiers into perfectly drilled machines, and contrasting this with the free play left to the individual soldier in the French system: "In consequence of their purely mechanical training," says this writer, "the Russians, in spite of their splendid courage, were in the Crimean war constantly beaten by the French, nay, decidedly beaten *even by the English and the Turks.*"\* Hardly a German newspaper can discuss territorial changes in Europe but it will add, after its remarks on the probable policy of France in this or that event: "England will probably make a fuss, but what England thinks is of no importance." I believe the German newspapers must keep a phrase of that kind stereotyped, they use it so often. France is our very good friend just now, but at bottom our "clear intelligence penetrating through sophisms," and so on, is not held in much more esteem there than in Germany. One of the gravest and most moderate of French newspapers—a newspaper, too, our very good friend, like France herself, into the bargain—broke out lately, when some jealousy of the proposed Cholera Commission in the East was shown on this side the water, in terms which, though less rough than the "great fool" of the *Saturday Review*, were still far from flattering. "Let us speak to these English the only language they can comprehend. England lives for her trade; Cholera interrupts trade; therefore it is for England's interest to join in precautions against Cholera."

Compliments of this sort are displeasing to remember, displeasing to repeat; but their abundance strikes the attention; and then the happy unconsciousness of those at whom they are aimed, their state of imperturbable self-satisfaction, strikes the attention too, and makes an inquisitive mind quite eager to see its way clearly in this apparent game of cross purposes. For never, surely, was there such a game of cross purposes

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\* Ja, selbst von den Engländern und Türkern entschieden geschlagen,

played. It came to its height when Lord Palmerston died the other day. Lord Palmerston was England; "the best type of our age and country," *The Times* well called him; he was "a great representative man, emphatically the English Minister;" the interpreter of the wishes of that great middle class of this country which supplies the mind, the will, and the power requisite for all the great and good things that have to be done, and therefore "acknowledged by a whole people as their best impersonation." Monsieur Thiers says of Pitt, that though he used and abused the strength of England, she was the second country in the world at the time of his death, and the first eight years afterwards. That was after Waterloo and the triumphs of Wellington. And that era of primacy and triumphs Lord Palmerston, say the English newspapers, has carried on to this hour. "What Wellington was as a soldier, that was Palmerston as a statesman." When I read these words in some foreign city or other, I could not help rubbing my eyes and asking myself if I was dreaming. Why, taking Lord Palmerston's career from 1830 (when he first became Foreign Secretary) to his death, there cannot be a shadow of doubt, for any one with eyes and ears in his head, that he found England the first Power in the world's estimation, and that he leaves her the third, after France and the United States. I am no politician; I mean no disparagement at all to Lord Palmerston, to whose talents and qualities I hope I can do justice; and indeed it is not Lord Palmerston's policy, or any Minister's policy, that is in question here, it is the policy of all of us, it is the policy of England; for in a government such as ours is at present, it is only, as we are so often reminded, by interpreting public opinion, by being "the best type of his age and country," that a Minister governs; and Lord Palmerston's greatness lay precisely in our all "acknowledging him as our best impersonation." Well, then, to this our logic, our practical efforts in the way of criticism, our clear manly intelligence penetrating through sophisms and ignoring commonplaces, and above all, our redoubtable phalanx possessing these advantages in the highest degree, our great middle class, which makes Parliament, and which supplies the mind, the will, and the power requisite for all the great and good things that have to be done, have brought us; to the third place in the world's estimation, instead of the first. He who disbelieves it, let him go round to every embassy in Europe and ask if it is not true.

The foreigners, indeed, are in no doubt as to the real authors of the policy of modern England; they know that ours is no longer a policy of Pitts and aristocracies, disposing of every movement of the hoodwinked nation to whom they dictate it; they know that our policy is now dictated by the strong middle part of England,—England happy, as Mr. Lowe, quoting Aristotle, says, in having her middle part strong and her extremes weak; and that, though we are administered by one of our weak extremes, the aristocracy, these managers administer us, as a weak extreme naturally must, with a nervous attention to the wishes of the strong middle part,

whose agents they are. It was not the aristocracy which made the Crimean war; it was the strong middle part—the constituencies. It was the strong middle part which showered abuse and threats on Germany for mishandling Denmark; and when Germany gruffly answered, *Come and stop us*, slapped its pockets, and vowed that it had never had the slightest notion of pushing matters so far as this. It was the strong middle part which, by the voice of its favourite newspapers, kept threatening Germany, after she had snapped her fingers at us, with a future chastisement from France, just as a smarting school-boy threatens his bully with a drubbing to come from some big boy in the background. It was the strong middle part, speaking through the same newspapers, which was full of coldness, slights, and sermons for the American Federals during their late struggle; and as soon as they had succeeded, discovered that it had always wished them well, and that nothing was so much to be desired as that the United States, and we, should be the fastest friends possible. Some people will say that the aristocracy was an equal offender in this respect: very likely; but the behaviour of the strong middle part makes more impression than the behaviour of a weak extreme; and the more so, because from the middle class, their fellows in numberless ways, the Americans expected sympathy, while from the aristocracy they expected none. And, in general, the faults with which foreigners reproach us in the matters named,—rash engagement, intemperate threatening, undignified retreat, ill-timed cordiality,—are not the faults of an aristocracy, by nature in such concerns prudent, reticent, dignified, sensitive on the point of honour; they are rather the faults of a rich middle class,—testy, absolute, ill-acquainted with foreign matters, a little ignoble, very dull to perceive when it is making itself ridiculous.

I know the answer one gets at home when one says that England is not very highly considered just now on the Continent. There is first of all the envy to account for it,—that of course; and then our clear intelligence is making a radical change in our way of dealing with the Continent; the old, bad, aristocratical policy of incessantly intermeddling with the affairs of the Continent,—this it is getting rid of; it is leaving the miserable foreigners to themselves, to their wars, despotisms, bureaucracy, and hatred of free, prosperous England. A few inconveniences may arise before the transition from our old policy to our new is fairly accomplished, and we quite leave off the habit of meddling where our own interests are not at stake. We may be exposed to a little mortification in the passage, but our clear intelligence will discern any occasion where our interests are really at stake. Then we shall come forward and prove ourselves as strong as ever; and the foreigners, in spite of their envy, know it. But what strikes me so much in all which these foreigners say is, that it is just this clear intelligence of ours that they appear at the present moment to hold cheap. Englishmen are often heard complaining of the little gratitude foreign nations show them for their sympathy, their good-will. The reason is, that the foreigners

think that an Englishman's good-will to a foreign cause, or dislike to it, is never grounded in a perception of its real merits and bearings, but in some chance circumstance. They say the Englishman never, in these cases, really comprehends the situation, and so they can never feel him to be in living sympathy with them. I have got into much trouble for calling my countrymen Philistines, and all through these remarks I am determined never to use that word; but I wonder if there can be anything offensive in calling one's countryman a young man from the country. I hope not; and if not, I should say, for the benefit of those who have seen Mr. John Parry's amusing entertainment, that England and Englishmen, holding forth on some great crisis in a foreign country,—Poland, say, or Italy,—are apt to have on foreigners very much the effect of the young man from the country who talks to the nursemaid after she has upset the perambulator. There is a terrible crisis, and the discourse of the young man from the country, excellent in itself, is felt not to touch the crisis vitally. Nevertheless, on he goes; the perambulator lies a wreck, the child screams, the nursemaid wrings her hands, the old gentleman storms, the policeman gesticulates, the crowd thickens; still, that astonishing young man talks on, serenely unconscious that he is not at the centre of the situation.

Happening to be much thrown with certain foreigners, who criticised England in this sort of way, I used often to think what a short and ready way one of our hard-hitting English newspapers would take with these scorners, if they fell into its hands. But being myself a mere seeker for truth, with nothing trenchant or authoritative about me, I could do no more than look shocked and begin to ask questions. "What!" I said, "you hold the England of to-day cheap, and declare that we do not comprehend the situation; yet you rate the England of 1815 so high, and call our fathers and grandfathers the foremost people in Europe. Did they comprehend the situation better than we?" "Yes," replied my foreign friends, "the situation as they had it, a great deal better. Their time was a time for energy, and they succeeded in it perfectly. Our time is a time for intelligence, and you are not succeeding in it at all."

Though I could not hear without a shudder this insult to the earnest good sense which, as the *Morning Star* says, may be fairly set down as the general characteristic of England and Englishmen everywhere, yet I pricked up my ears when my companions talked of energy, and England's success in a time for energy, because I have always had a notion myself that energy—energy with honesty—is England's great force; a greater force to her, even, than her talent for penetrating through sophisms and ignoring commonplaces; so I begged my acquaintances to explain a little more fully to me what they meant. "Nothing can be clearer," they answered. "Your *Times* was telling you the other day, with the enlightenment it so often shows at present, that instead of being proud of Waterloo and the great war which was closed by it, it really seemed as if you ought rather



to feel embarrassed at the recollection of them, since the policy for which they were fought is grown obsolete; the world has taken a turn which was not Lord Castlereagh's, and to look back on the great Tory war is to look back upon an endless account of blood and treasure wasted. Now, that is not so at all. What France had in her head, from the Convention, 'faithful to the principles of the sovereignty of the people, which will not permit them to acknowledge anywhere the institutions militating against it,' to Napoleon, with his 'immense projects for assuring to France the empire of the world,'—what she had in her head, along with many better and sounder notions destined to happier fortune, was *supremacy*. She had always a vision of a sort of federation of the States of Europe under the primacy of France. Now to this the world, whose progress no doubt lies in the direction of more concert and common purpose among nations, but these nations free, self-impelled, and living each its own life, was not moving. Whoever knocks to pieces a scheme of this sort does the world a service. In antiquity, Roman empire had a scheme of this sort, and much more. The barbarians knocked it to pieces—honour to the barbarians. In the middle ages Frederick the Second had a scheme of this sort. The Papacy knocked it to pieces—honour to the Papacy. In our own century, France had a scheme of this sort. Your fathers knocked it to pieces—honour to your fathers. They were just the people to do it. They had a vigorous lower class, a vigorous middle class, and a vigorous aristocracy. The lower class worked and fought, the middle class found the money, and the aristocracy wielded the whole. This aristocracy was high-spirited, reticent, firm, despising frothy declamation. It had all the qualities useful for its task and time; Lord Grenville's words, as early as 1793: 'England will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a pretended natural right, the political system of Europe;' these few words, with their lofty strength, contain, as one may say, the prophecy of future success: you hear the very voice of an aristocracy standing on sure ground, and with the stars in its favour. Well, you succeeded, and in 1815, after Waterloo, you were the first power in Europe. 'These people have a secret,' we all said; 'they have discerned the way the world was going, and therefore they have prevailed; while, on the other hand, the "stars in their courses fought against Sisera."' We held you in the greatest respect; we tried to copy your constitutional government; we read your writers. 'After the peace,' says George Sand, 'the literature of Great Britain crossed the straits, and came to reign amongst us.' It reigned in Byron and Scott, voices of the great aristocratical spirit which had just won the victory: Scott expressing its robust, genial conservatism, holding by a thousand roots to the past; Byron its defiant force and indomitable pride.

"We believed in you for a good while; but gradually it began to dawn upon us that the era for which you had had the secret was over, and that a new era, for which you had not the secret, was beginning. The work of the old era was to prevent the formation of a second Roman empire,



and to maintain a store of free, rich, various national lives for the future to work with and bring to harmony. This was a work of force, of energy: it was a work for an aristocratical power, since, as you yourself are always saying, aristocracies, poor in ideas, are rich in energy. You were a great aristocratical power, and did it. But then came an era with another work, a work of which it is the great glory of the French Revolution (pardon us for saying so, we know it makes some of your countrymen angry to hear it,) passionately to have embraced the idea: the work of making human life, hampered by a past which it has outgrown, natural and rational. This is a work of intelligence, and in intelligence an aristocratic power, as you know, does not so much shine. Accordingly, since the world has been steadily moving this way, you seem to have lost your secret, and we are gradually ceasing to believe in you. You will say, perhaps, that England is no longer an aristocratical power, but a middle-class power, wielded by an industrial middle class, as the England of your fathers was wielded by a territorial aristocracy. This may be so; and indeed, as the style, carriage, and policy of England have of late years been by no means those of an aristocratical power, it probably is so. But whatever class dictates it, your course, allow us to say, has not of late years been intelligent; has not, at any rate, been successful. And depend upon it, a nation who has the secret of her era, who discerns which way the world is going, is successful, keeps rising. Can you yourselves, with all your powers of self-satisfaction, suppose that the Crimean war raised you, or that your Indian mutiny raised you, or that your attitude in the Italian war raised you, as your performances at the beginning of the century raised you? Surely you cannot. You held your own, if you will; you showed tenacity; you saved yourselves from disaster; but you did not raise yourselves, did not advance one jot. Can you, on the other hand, suppose that your attitude in the Danish business, in the American business, has not lowered you? You are losing the instinct which tells people how the world is going; you are beginning to make mistakes; you are falling out of the front rank. The era of aristocracies is over; nations must now stand or fall by the intelligence of their middle class and their people. The people with you is still an embryo; no one can yet quite say what it will come to. You lean, therefore, with your whole weight upon the intelligence of your middle class. And intelligence, in the true sense of the word, your middle class has absolutely none."

I was aghast. I thought of this great class, every morning and evening extolled for its clear, manly intelligence by a hundred vigorous and influential writers; and though the fine enthusiasm of these writers had always seemed to me to be carrying them a little too far, and I had even been guilty of the indecency of now and then calling my countrymen Philistines, these foreign critics struck me as passing all bounds, and quite out-Heroding Herod. Fortunately I had just received from England a copy of Mr. Lowe's powerful and much-admired speech against Reform. I took it out of my pocket. "Now," said I to my envious, carping

foreigners, "just listen to me. You say that the early years of this century were a time for energy, and we did well in them; you say that the last thirty or forty years have been a time for intelligence, and we have done ill in them. Mr. Lowe shall answer you. Here is his reading of our last thirty or forty years' history, as made by our middle-class Parliament, as he calls it; by a Parliament, therefore, filled by the mind and will of this great class whose rule you disparage. Mr. Lowe says: 'The seven Houses of Commons that have sat since the Reform Bill have performed exploits unrivalled, not merely in the six centuries during which Parliament has existed, but in the whole history of representative assemblies.' He says: 'Look at the noble work, the heroic work which the House of Commons has performed within these thirty-five years. It has gone through and revised every institution of the country; it has scanned our trade, our colonies, our laws, and our municipal institutions; everything that was complained of, everything that had grown distasteful, has been touched with success and moderation by the amending hand. And to such a point have these amendments been carried, that when gentlemen come to argue this question, and do all in their power to get up a practical grievance, they fail in suggesting even one.' There is what Mr. Lowe says. You see we have nothing left to desire, absolutely nothing. As Mr. Lowe himself says: 'With all this continued peace, contentment, happiness, and prosperity,—England in its present state of development and civilization,—the mighty fabric of English prosperity,—what can we want more?' Evidently nothing: therefore to propose 'for England to make a step in the direction of democracy is the strangest and wildest proposition ever broached by man.' People talk of America. 'In America the working classes are the masters; does anybody doubt that?' And compare, Mr. Lowe means, England, as the middle class is making her, with America, as the working classes are making her. How entirely must the comparison turn to the advantage of the English middle class! Then, finally, as to the figure we cut in the eyes of the world, our grandeur and our future, here is a crowning sentence, worthy of Lord Macaulay himself, whose style Mr. Lowe enthusiastically admires: '*The destiny of England is in the great heart of England!*'"

Mr. Bright had not then made his famous speech about the misdeeds of the Tories, but, if he had, I should certainly have added that our middle class, by these unrivalled exploits of theirs, had not only raised their country to an unprecedented height of greatness, but had also saved our foolish and obstructive aristocracy from being emptied into the Thames.

As it was, however, what I had urged, or rather what I had borrowed from Mr. Lowe, seemed to me exceedingly forcible, and I looked anxiously for its effect on my hearers. They did not appear so much disconcerted as I had hoped. "Undoubtedly," they said, "the coming of your middle class to power was a natural, salutary event, to be blessed, not anathematized. Aristocracies cannot deal with a time for intelligence; their sense

is for facts, not ideas. The world of ideas is the possible, the future ; the world of aristocracies is the established, the past, which has made their fortune and which they hope to prolong. No doubt your middle class found a great deal of commercial and social business waiting to be done, which your aristocratic governments had left undone, and had no talents for doing. Their talents were for other times and tasks ; for curbing the power of the Crown when other classes were too inconsiderable to do it ; for managing (if one compares them with other aristocracies) their affairs and their dependants with vigour, prudence, and moderation, during the feudal and patriarchal stage of society ; for wielding the force of their country against foreign powers with energy, firmness, and dignity. But then came the modern spirit, the modern time : the notion, as we say, of making human life more natural and rational ; or, as your philosophers say, of getting the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Have you succeeded, are you succeeding, in this hour of the many, as your aristocracy succeeded in the hour of the few ? You say you are ; you point to ' the noble work, the heroic work which the House of Commons has performed within these last thirty-five years ; everything that was complained of, everything that had grown distasteful, has been touched with success and moderation by the amending hand.' Allow us to set clap-trap on one side ; we are not at one of your public meetings. What is the modern problem ? to make human life, the life of society, all through, more natural and rational ; to have the greatest possible number of one's nation happy. Here is the standard by which we are to try ourselves and one another now, as national grandeur, in the old regal and aristocratical conception of it, was the standard formerly. Every nation must have wished to be England in 1815, tried by the old standard : must we all wish to be England in 1865, tried by the new standard ? Your aristocracy, you say, is as splendid, as fortunate, as enviable as ever : very likely ; but all the world cannot be aristocracy. What do you make of the mass of your society, of its vast middle and lower portion ? Are we to envy you your common people ; is our common people to wish to change places with yours ; are we to say that you, more than we, have the modern secret here ? Without insisting too much on the stories of misery and degradation which are perpetually reaching us, we will say that no one can mix with a great crowd in your country, no one can walk with his eyes and ears open through the poor quarters of your large towns, and not feel that your common people, as it meets one's eyes, is at present more raw, to say the very least, less enviable-looking, further removed from civilized and humane life, than the common people almost anywhere. Well, then, you are not a success, according to the modern standard, with your common people. Are you a success with your middle class ? They have the power now ; what have they made of themselves ? what sort of a life is theirs ? A life more natural, more rational, fuller of happiness, more enviable, therefore, than the life of the middle classes on the Continent ? Yes, you will say, because the English middle class is

the most industrious and the richest. But it is just here that you go a great deal too fast, and so deceive yourselves. What brings about, or rather tends to bring about, a natural, rational life, satisfying the modern spirit? This: the growth of a love of industry, trade, and wealth; the growth of a love of the things of the mind; and the growth of a love of beautiful things. There are body, intelligence, and soul all taken care of. Of these three factors of modern life, your middle class has no notion of any but one, the first. Their love of industry, trade, and wealth, is certainly prodigious; and their example has done us a great deal of good: we, too, are beginning to get this love, and we wanted it. But what notion have they of anything else? Do but look at them, look at their lives. Some of us know your middle class very well; a great deal better than your own upper class in general knows them. Your middle class is educated, to begin with, in the worst schools of your country, and our middle class is educated in the best of ours. What becomes of them after that? The fineness and capacity of a man's spirit is shown by his enjoyments; your middle class has an enjoyment in its business, we admit, and gets on well in business and makes money; but beyond that? Drugged with business, your middle class seems to have its sense blunted for any stimulus besides, except religion; it has a religion, narrow, unintelligent, repulsive. All sincere religion does something for the spirit, raises a man out of the bondage of his merely bestial part, and saves him; but the religion of your middle class is the very lowest form of intellectual life which one can imagine as saving. What other enjoyments have they? The newspapers, a sort of eating and drinking which are not to our taste, a literature of books almost entirely religious or semi-religious, books utterly unreadable by an educated class anywhere, but which your middle class consumes, they say, by the hundred thousand; and in their evenings, for a great treat, a lecture on teetotalism or nunneries. Can any life be imagined more hideous, more dismal, more unenviable? Compare it with the life of our middle class as you have seen it on the Rhine this summer, or at Lausanne, or Zurich. The world of enjoyment, so liberalizing and civilizing, belongs to the middle classes there, as well as the world of business; the whole world is theirs, they possess life; in England the highest class seems to have the monopoly of the world of enjoyment, the middle class enjoys itself, as your Shakspeare would say, in hugger-mugger, and possesses life only by reading in the newspapers, which it does devoutly, the doings of great people. Well then, we do not at all want to be as your middle class; we want to learn from it to do business and to get rich, and this we are learning a great deal faster than you think; but we do not, like your middle class, fix our consummation here: we have a notion of a whole world besides not dreamed of in your middle class's philosophy; so they, too, like your common people, seem to us no success. They may be the masters of the modern time with you, but they are not solving its problem. They cannot see the way the world is going, and the future

does not belong to them. Talk of the present state of development and civilization of England, meaning England as they represent it to us ! Why, the capital, pressing danger of England, is the barbarism of her middle class ; the civilization of her middle class is England's capital, pressing want."

"Well, but," said I, still catching at Mr. Lowe's powerful help, "the Parliament of this class has performed exploits unrivalled not merely in the six centuries during which Parliament has existed, but in the whole history of representative assemblies. The exploits are there: all the reforms we have made in the last five-and-thirty years."

"Let us distinguish," replied the envious foreigners, "let us distinguish. We named three powers—did we not?—which go to spread that rational humane life which is the aim of modern society: the love of wealth, the love of intelligence, the love of beauty. Your middle class, we agreed, has the first; its commercial legislation, accordingly, has been very good, and in advance of that of foreign countries. Not that free-trade was really brought about by your middle class: it was brought about, as important reforms always are, by two or three great men. However, let your middle class, which had the sense to accept free trade, have the credit of it. But this only brings us a certain way. The legislation of your middle class in all that goes to give human life more intelligence and beauty, is no better than was to be expected from its own want of both. It is nothing to say that its legislation in these respects is an improvement upon what you had before; that is not the question; you are holding up its achievements as absolutely admirable, as unrivalled, as a model to us. You may have done—for you—much for religious toleration, social improvement, public instruction, municipal reform, law reform; but the French Revolution and its consequences have done, upon the Continent, a great deal more. Such a spectacle as your Irish Church Establishment you cannot find in France or Germany. Your Irish land-question you hardly dare to face,—Stein settled as threatening a land-question in Prussia. Of the schools for your middle class we have already spoken; while these schools are what they are, while the schools for your poor are maintained in the expensive, unjust, irrational way they are, England is full of endowments and foundations, capable by themselves, if properly applied, of putting your public education on a much better footing. In France and Germany all similar funds are thus employed, having been brought under public responsible management; in England they are left to private irresponsible management, and are, in nine cases out of ten, wasted. You talk of municipal reform; and cities and the manner of life in them have, for the modern business of promoting a more rational and humane life in the great body of the community, incalculable importance. Do you suppose we should tolerate in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, your London corporation and London vestries, and London as they make it? In your provincial towns you do better; but even there, do the municipalities show a tenth part either of the intelligence or the care for

the ends, as we have laid them down, of modern society, that our municipalities show? Your middle-class man thinks it the highest pitch of development and civilization when his letters are carried twelve times a day from Islington to Camberwell, and from Camberwell to Islington, and if railway-trains run to and fro between them every quarter of an hour. He thinks it is nothing that the trains only carry him from an illiberal, dismal life at Islington to an illiberal, dismal life at Camberwell; and the letters only tell him that such is the life there. A Swiss burgher takes Heaven knows how many hours to go from Berne to Geneva, and his trains are very few; this is an extreme on the other side; but compare the life the Swiss burgher finds or leaves at Berne or Geneva with the life of the middle class in your English towns. Or else you think to cover everything by saying: 'We are free! we are free! Our newspapers can say what they like!' Freedom, like Industry, is a very good horse to ride—but to ride somewhere. You seem to think that you have only got to get on the back of your horse Freedom, or your horse Industry, and to ride away as hard as you can, to be sure of coming to the right destination. If your newspapers can say what they like, you think you are sure of being well advised. That comes of your inaptitude for ideas, and aptitude for clap-trap; you can never see the two sides of a question; never perceive that every human state of things, even a good one, has its inconveniences. We can see the conveniences of your state well enough; and the inconveniences of ours, of newspapers not free, and prefects over-busy; and there are plenty of us who proclaim them. You eagerly repeat after us all we say that redounds to your own honour and glory; but you never follow our example yourselves. You are full of acuteness to perceive the ill influence of our prefects on us; but if any one says to you, in your turn, 'The English system of a great landed aristocracy keeps your lower class a lower class for ever, and materialises and vulgarises your whole middle class,' you stare vacantly at the speaker, you cannot even take in his ideas; you can only blurt forth, in reply, some clap-trap or other about a 'system of such tried and tested efficiency as no other country was ever happy enough to possess since the world was a world.'

I have observed in my travels, that most young gentlemen of our highest class go through Europe, from Calais to Constantinople, with one sentence on their lips, and one idea in their minds, which suffices, apparently, to explain all that they see to them: *Foreigners don't wash*. No doubt, thought I to myself, my friends have fallen in with some distinguished young Britons of this sort, and had their feelings wounded by them; hence their rancour against our aristocracy. And as to our middle class, foreigners have no notion how much this class, with us, contains; how many shades and gradations in it there are, and how little what is said of one part of it will apply to another. Something of this sort I could not help urging aloud. "You do not know," I said, "that there is broken off, as one may say, from the top of our middle class, a large fragment, which receive the best education the country can give, the same



education as our aristocracy; which is perfectly intelligent and which enjoys life perfectly. These men do the main part of our intellectual work, write all our best newspapers; and cleverer people, I assure you, are nowhere to be found."

"Clever enough," was the answer, "but they show not much intelligence, in the true sense of the word,—not much intelligence of the way the world is going. Whether it is that they must try to hit your current public opinion, which is not intelligent; whether it is that, having been, as you say, brought up with your aristocracy, they have been too much influenced by it, have taken, half insensibly, an aristocracy's material standard, and do not believe in ideas; certain it is that their intelligence has no ardour, no plan, leads them nowhere; it is ineffectual. Your intellect is at this moment, to an almost unexampled degree, without influence on the intellect of Europe."

While this was being said, I noticed an Italian, who was one of our party, fumbling with his pocket-book, from whence he presently produced a number of grey newspaper slips, which I could see were English. "Now just listen to me for a moment," he cried, "and I will show you what makes us say, on the Continent, that you English have no sense for logic, for ideas, and that your praise and blame, having no substantial foundation, are worth very little. You remember the famous French pamphlet before our war began in 1859: *Napoleon the Third and Italy*. The pamphlet appealed, in the French way, to reason and first principles; the upshot of it was this: 'The treaties which bind governments would be invariable only if the world was immovable. A power which should intrench itself behind treaties in order to resist modifications demanded by general feeling would have doubtless on her side an acquired right, but she would have against her moral right and universal conscience.' You English, on the other hand, took your stand on things as they were: 'If treaties are made,' said your *Times*, 'they must be respected. Tear one, and all are waste paper.' Very well; this is a policy, at any rate, an aristocratical policy; much may be said for it. *The Times* was full of contempt for the French pamphlet, an essay, as it called it, 'conveying the dreams of an agitator expressed in the language of an academician.' It said: 'No one accustomed to the pithy comments with which liberty notices passing history, can read such a production without complacency that he does not live in the country which produces it. To see the heavy apparatus of an essay brought out to solve a question on which men have corresponded and talked and speculated in the funds, and acted in the most practical manner possible for a month past, is as strange as if we beheld some spectral review,' and so on. Still very well; there is the strong practical man despising theories and reveries. 'The sentiment of race is just now threatening to be exceedingly troublesome. It is to a considerable extent in our days a literary revival.' That is all to the same effect. Then came a hitch in our affairs, and fortune seemed as if she was going to give, as she often does give, the anti-theorists a triumph. 'The Italian



plot,' cried *The Times*, 'has failed. The Emperor and his familiars knew not the moral strength which is still left in the enlightened communities of Europe. To the unanimous and indignant reprobation of English opinion is due the failure of the imperial plots. While silence and fear reign everywhere abroad, the eyes and ears of the Continent are turned continually to these Islands. English opinion has been erected into a kind of Areopagus.' Our business went forward again, and your English opinion grew very stern indeed. 'Sardinia,' said *The Times*, 'is told very plainly that she has deserted the course by which alone she could hope either to be happy or great, and abandoned herself to the guidance of fatal delusions, which are luring her on to destruction. By cultivating the arts of peace she would have been solving, in the only possible way, the difficult problem of Italian independence. She has been taught by France to look instead to the acquisition of fresh territory by war and conquest. She has now been told with perfect truth by the warning voice of the British Parliament that she has not a moment to lose in retracing her steps, if indeed her penitence be not too late.' Well, to make a long story short, we did not retrace our steps; we went on, as you know; we succeeded; and now let us make a jump from the spring to the autumn. Here is your unanimous English opinion, here is your Areopagus, here is your *Times*, in October: 'It is very irregular (Sardinia's course), it is contrary to all diplomatic forms. Francis the Second can show a thousand texts of international law against it. Yes; but there are extremities beyond all law, and there are laws which existed before even society was formed. There are laws which are implanted in our nature, and which form part of the human mind,' and so on. Why, here you have entirely boxed the compass and come round from the aristocratical programme to the programme of the French pamphlet, 'the dreams of an agitator in the language of the rhetorician!' And you approved not only our present but our past, and kindly took off your ban of reprobation issued in February. 'How great a change has been effected by the wisely courageous policy of Sardinia! The firmness and boldness which have raised Italy from degradation form the enduring character of a ten years' policy. King Victor Emmanuel and his sagacious counsellor have achieved success by remembering that fortune favours the bold.' There you may see why the mind of France influences the Continent so much and the mind of England so little. France has intelligence enough to perceive the ideas that are moving, or are likely to move, the world; she believes in them, sticks to them, and shapes her course to suit them. You neither perceive them nor believe in them, but you play with them like counters, taking them up and laying them down at random, and following really some turn of your imagination, some gust of liking or disliking. When I heard some of your countrymen complaining of Italy and her ingratitude for English sympathy, I made, to explain it, the collection of those extracts and of a good many more. They are all at your service; I have some here from the *Saturday Review*, which you will find exactly

follow suit with those from *The Times*." "No, thank you," I answered, "*The Times* is enough. My relations with the *Saturday Review* are rather tight-stretched, as you say here, already; make me a party to none of your quarrels with them."

After this my original tormentor once more took up his parable. "You see now what I meant," he said, "by saying that you did better in the old time, in the day of aristocracies. An aristocracy has no ideas, but it has a policy,—to resist change. In this policy it believes, it sticks to it; when it is beaten in it, it holds its tongue. This is respectable, at any rate. But your great middle class, as you call it, your present governing power, having no policy, except that of doing a roaring trade, does not know what to be at in great affairs,—blows hot and cold by turns,—makes itself ridiculous in short. It was a good aristocratical policy to have helped Austria in the Italian war; it was a good aristocratical policy to have helped the South in the American war. The days of aristocratical policy are over for you; with your new middle-class public opinion you cut, in Italy, the figure our friend here has just shown you; in America you scold right and left, you get up a monster memorial to deprecate the further effusion of blood; you lament over the abridgment of civil liberty by people engaged in a struggle for life and death, and meaning to win; and when they turn a deaf ear to you and win, you say, 'Oh, now let us be one great united Anglo-Saxon family and astonish the world.' This is just of a piece with your threatening Germany with the Emperor of the French. Do you not see that all these blunders dispose the Americans, who are very shrewd, and who have been succeeding as steadily as you have been failing, to answer: 'We have got the lead, no thanks to you, and we mean to astonish the world without you.' Unless you change, unless your middle class grows more intelligent, you will tell upon the world less and less, and end by being a second Holland. We do not hold you cheap for saying you will wash your hands of all concerns but your own, that you do not care a rush for influence in Europe; though this sentence of your Lord Bolingbroke is true: 'The opinion of mankind, which is fame after death, is superior strength and power in life.' We hold you cheap because you show so few signs, except in the one department of industry, of understanding your time and its tendencies, and of exhibiting a modern life which shall be a signal success. And the reaction is the stronger, because, after 1815, we believed in you as now-a-days we are coming to believe in America. You had won the last game, and we thought you had your hand full of trumps, and were going to win the next. Now the game has begun to be played, and we have an inkling of what your cards are; we shrewdly suspect you have scarcely any trumps at all."

I am no arguer, as is well known, "and every puny whipster gets my sword." So, instead of making bad worse by a lame answer, I held my tongue, consoling myself with the thought that these foreigners get from us, at any rate, plenty of Rolands for any stray Oliver they may

have the luck to give us. I have since meditated a good deal on what was then said, but I cannot profess to be yet quite clear about it. However, all due deductions made for envy, exaggeration, and injustice, enough stuck by me of these remarks on our logic, criticism, and love of intelligence, to determine me to go on trying (taking care, of course, to steer clear of indecency) to keep my mind fixed on these, instead of singing hosannahs to our actual state of development and civilization. The old recipe, to think a little more and bustle a little less, seemed to me still the best recipe to follow. So I take comfort when I find the *Guardian* reproaching me with having no influence; for I know what influence means,—a party, practical proposals, action; and I say to myself: “Even suppose I could get some followers, and assemble them, brimming with affectionate enthusiasm, in a committee-room at some inn; what on earth should I say to them? what resolutions could I propose? I could only propose the old Socratic commonplace, *Know thyself*; and how blank they would all look at that!” No; to inquire, perhaps too curiously, what that present state of English development and civilization is, which according to Mr. Lowe is so perfect that to give votes to the working class is stark madness; and, on the other hand, to be less sanguine about the divine and saving effect of a vote on its possessor than my friends in the committee-room at the “Spotted Dog,”—that is my inevitable portion. To bring things under the light of one’s intelligence, to see how they look there, to accustom oneself simply to regard the Marylebone Vestry, or the Educational Home, or the Irish Church Establishment, or our railway management, or our Divorce Court, or our gin-palaces open on Sunday and the Crystal Palace shut, as absurdities—that is, I am sure, invaluable exercise for us just at present. Let all persist in it who can, and steadily set their desires on introducing, with time, a little more soul and spirit into the too, too solid flesh of English society.

I have a friend who is very sanguine, in spite of the dismal croakings of these foreigners, about the turn things are even now taking amongst us. “Mean and ignoble as our middle class looks,” he says, “it has this capital virtue, it has seriousness. With frivolity, cultured or uncultured, you can do nothing; but with seriousness there is always hope. Then, too, the present bent of the world towards amusing itself, so perilous to the highest class, is curative and good for our middle class. A piano in a quaker’s drawing-room is a step for him to more humane life; nay, perhaps, even the penny gaff of the poor East-Londoner is a step for him to more humane life; it is—what example shall we choose?—it is *Strathmore*, let us say,—it is the one-pound-eleven-and-sixpenny gaff of the young gentlemen of the clubs and the young ladies of Belgravia, that is for them but a step in the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire. Besides, say what you like of the ideanness of aristocracies, the vulgarity of our middle class, the immaturity of our lower, and the poor chance which a happy type of modern life has between them, consider this: Of all that makes life liberal and humane,—of light, of ideas, of culture,

—every man in every class of society who has a dash of genius in him is the boon friend. By his bringing up, by his habits, by his interest, he may be their enemy; by the primitive, unalterable complexion of his nature, he is their friend. Therefore, the movement of the modern spirit will be more and more felt among us, it will spread, it will prevail. Nay," this enthusiast often continues, getting excited as he goes on, "*The Times* itself, which so stirs some people's indignation—what is *The Times* but a gigantic Sancho Panza, to borrow a phrase of your friend Heine;—a gigantic Sancho Panza, following by an attraction he cannot resist that poor, mad, scorned, suffering, sublime enthusiast, the modern spirit; following it, indeed, with constant grumbling, expostulation, and opposition, with airs of protection, of compassionate superiority, with an incessant byplay of nods, shrugs, and winks addressed to the spectators; following it, in short, with all the incurable recalcitrancy of a lower nature, but still following it?" When my friend talks thus, I always shake my head, and say that this sounds very like the transcendentalism which has already brought me into so many scrapes.

I have another friend again (and I am grown so cowed by all the rebuke my original speculations have drawn upon me that I find myself more and more filling the part of a mere listener), who calls himself Anglo-Saxon rather than English, and this is what he says: "We are a small country," he says, "and our middle class has, as you say, not much gift for anything but making money. Our freedom and wealth have given us a great start, our capital will give us for a long time an advantage; but as other countries grow better-governed and richer, we must necessarily sink to the position to which our size and our want of any eminent gift for telling upon the world spiritually, doom us. But look at America; it is the same race; whether we are first or they, Anglo-Saxonism triumphs. You used to say that they had all the Philistinism of the English middle class from which they spring, and a great many faults of their own besides. But you noticed, too, that, blindly as they seemed following in general the star of their god Buncombe, they showed, at the same time, a feeling for ideas, a vivacity and play of mind, which our middle class has not, and which comes to the Americans, probably, from their democratic life, with its ardent hope, its forward stride, its gaze fixed on the future. Well, since these great events have lately come to purge and form them, how is this intelligence of theirs developing itself? Now they are manifesting a quick sense to see how the world is really going, and a sure faith, indispensable to all nations that are to be great, that greatness is only to be reached by going that way and no other? And then, if you talk of culture, look at the culture their middle, and even their working class is getting, as compared with the culture ours are getting. The trash which circulates by the hundred thousand among our middle class has no readers in America; our rubbish is for home-consumption; all our best books, books which are read here only by the small educated class, are in

America the books of the great reading public. So over there they will advance spiritually as well as materially ; and if our race at last flowers to modern life there, and not here, does it so much matter ? " So says my friend, who is, as I premised, a devotee of Anglo-Saxonism ; I, who share his pious frenzy but imperfectly, do not feel quite satisfied with these plans of vicarious greatness, and have a longing for this old and great country of ours to be always great in herself, not only in her progeny. So I keep looking at her, and thinking of her, and as often as I consider how history is a series of waves, coming gradually to a head and then breaking, and that, as the successive waves come up, one nation is seen at the top of this wave, and then another of the next, I ask myself, counting all the waves which have come up with England on the top of them : When the great wave which is now mounting has come up, will she be at the top of it ? *Ulla nihil, nec me quarentem vana moratur.*

Yes, we arraign her ; but she,  
The weary Titan, with deaf  
Ears, and labour-dimm'd eyes,  
Regarding neither to right  
Nor left, goes passively by,  
Staggering on to her goal ;  
Bearing, on shoulders immense,  
Atlantéan, the load,  
Wellnigh not to be borne,  
Of the too vast orb of her fate.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

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## My Experience in a Greek Quarantine.

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HAVING occasion during the past summer to go from one of the Turkish islands of the Mediterranean over to European terra-firma, I was obliged to go to Syra, the entrepôt of the Levant, to take passage in the Austrian Lloyd's steamer ; but as the Cholera panic and the restrictions laid on the steamers from all Turkish ports had virtually stopped regular communication with Greek ports, I was obliged to borrow the yacht of an English friend who happened to be visiting us at the time. Our island had had no case of Cholera, and indeed had never been visited by it; its general healthfulness was all that could be desired by the most exacting Board of Health, and as, moreover, we were fortified with English, Turkish, and Greek bills of health, I anticipated at the worst a detention of four or five days previous to being permitted to land.

We had a charming run of thirty odd hours, with just wind enough to make a landsman love the sea, and sighting Syra in the morning, stood directly in for the port. Half a mile off the mole-head we met a man-of-war's boat, the Greek blue and white stripes flying out from the stern, and received a most peremptory warning to go no nearer, fearfully shouted from a safe distance; and on learning that we were from a Turkish port, the officer ordered us off to Delos for eleven days' quarantine, declining even to look at our bill of health or hear any protest or explanations.

Those who have been at Syra may remember to the west of that port, and about ten miles away, a low, bare, and rocky island, which few people ever visit, and on which only two or three herdsmen live. On closer inspection one finds that what seemed to be one is really two islands, the larger called sometimes Rhenée, and sometimes the greater Delos, the smaller the true Delos, site of the famous temple of Apollo. In a bay on the south-eastern side of the former, the *Sylph* (I am sufficiently inexact in details as I have occasionally to pass through Syra, and don't care to have my identity discovered,) cast anchor, and the so-called lazaretto being only an insignificant collection of huts, built of rough boards, I elected to perform quarantine on board, even at the cost of detaining the *Sylph* longer than her owner had calculated. In fact the bare, dry, even burnt look of the island, without a shrub, a spring, or a living thing on it except a few guardiani and some luckless passengers of an English steamer which had preceded us by a few days, gave small hope of being able to pass eleven days of idleness endurably, in the heat of midsummer, where the sun is as fervent as on the south side of a Greek island. The steamer was from Alexandria, with over two hundred passengers on board, mostly Syriotes and other Greeks flying from the Cholera, then in the beginning



of its fury at that city; therefore they were most naturally put into quarantine. Their term was fourteen days, I believe, of which nearly a week had passed without any symptoms of sickness of any kind. We were near enough to hail across to her on still days and hear the complaints of the captain roared at sympathetic ears in good broad English, and witness by eye and ear the facts I am about to narrate, which I challenge the most patriotic and mendacious inhabitant of Syra to contradict.

The captain of the steamer having, like myself, only calculated on a few days' observation, had provided himself with sufficient stores for the time for his few cabin passengers, the great bulk of those on board being deck passengers, who provide themselves with food for the voyage. These had been exhausted soon after their arrival at quarantine; and the captain, praying in vain for supplies from the authorities of Syra, began to furnish his ship's supplies; for it was impossible, as he said, to see the poor people starve. But these supplies, abundant for his proper ends, would go but a little way in feeding that hungry multitude, and were threatened with exhaustion before the townspeople should awaken their Christianity from its sleep of, I imagine, about seventeen centuries. The captain appealed in vain to them to save their countrymen from starvation. They were not bound, they said, to provide food for people because they found them in quarantine. So the captain gave out all his stores, little by little, and shouted across to me to know if I had any to spare. The *Sylph* carried a crew of twelve men, and we naturally had two or three barrels of hard bread and salt beef stowed away for emergencies; and though what we could give them, with proper regard to our own needs, could be little more than a few hours' respite from starvation, it was impossible to withhold it.

The captain was an incarnate protest, a deck-walking imprecation on the miserly authorities of Syra. The people in his ship were not his own countrymen, but Greeks; he was under no obligation to provide a mouthful for one of them; they had no money to buy, and he had no authority to buy for them except from his own funds—to have done which he must have been a Roman prince or an English banker. So he wrote, and begged, and protested. He wrote to the English consul, Mr. Lloyd, and Mr. Lloyd stormed at the nomarch and demarch by turns in vain. The Syriotes would not send, and the consul could not—save a little for the captain and crew; and provisions were not only not supplied by the board of health, but permission to carry them off was denied those who would have taken them—so great was the panic at the idea of communication with the ship. Mr. Lloyd succeeded now and then in sending a small supply by the *guarda-costa*, and they bought now and then a kid of the herdsman on the “clean” part of the island, at exorbitant rates. But they, too, finally refused to communicate; and then the captain wrote to the consul—I saw the letter afterwards—“For three days my men have had no bread, and two of them have gone raving mad.” Amongst the cabin-passengers was a French woman, pregnant and near her confinement; for her the captain begged

for a doctor or nurse in vain—none would venture ; and when the time was come the poor mother had only the kindly care of the captain and her fellow-passengers, among whom was no woman or person competent to care for her. Fortunately, she passed through her trial safely.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Lloyd kept up his protests and remonstrances to people and government—protested against the inhumanity and the illegality of the whole thing—begged for relief to deaf ears : “ Better,” they said, “ that a few should suffer, than that forty thousand should incur the peril of Cholera. To allow people to carry provisions to the island was to run danger of communication with contagion.” The only reply of any significance that Mr. Lloyd got was a threat of burning his house over his head if he persisted in attempting to bring Cholera into Syra.

We, knowing nothing of this little turmoil, lay quietly under the intense sun waiting the lapse of time. The Greeks on the steamer might starve, but we were perhaps thankful that they were only Greeks ; we should wear through well enough, and then be free. Mr. Lloyd finally wrote to Athens ; the government at Athens ordered an examination ; and then the demos, under compulsion, voted meagre supplies to their famished countrymen.

But our fates were merciless. A few days, very few, before the steamer's time had expired, a ship arrived from Alexandria which actually had the Cholera on board ! Twenty or more had died and were thrown over-board on the voyage, as we afterwards learned, and several more were sick. As she came into the quarantine anchoring-ground and cast anchor, she dragged some distance, and seemed in a fair way to drift against the armed cutter which was doing duty as *guarda-costa* and *capo-guardiano*. The brave fellow—(I hope he wasn't a sailor)—ran out his guns, and prepared to sink the ship and all on board, lest she should come into contact with him. That scene is one I shall never forget and hardly ever forgive : the huddled passengers driven on deck by the pestilence and heat, and doubtless, already in a frenzy of fear from the perils within, found themselves met on the threshold of deliverance from their awful fellow-voyager by the open mouths of Greek carronades. Women shrieked and men howled with fright ; all prayed, supplicating the gods and the captain ; the *guarda-costa* people were in a worse panic, if possible,—shouted orders and counter-orders, ran out a gun and ran it in again, threatened, prayed and cursed, as though doom was on them. This horror of the Cholera seemed to have become a madness in the Greek mind. Our sailors gave the wretches the benefit of much good and strong English, which I fear was sadly wasted, and would have been equally so had it been equally good Greek ; but I noticed that our *guardiano* was stricken with fear at the bare idea of the vicinity of the infected ship. What the extent of the contagion was, we knew not of course ; but the hurrying and trepidation of the people on board, and in the boat which came alongside, made it evident that something unusual was going on. The boat lay far off, and the officers shouted very loudly ; and we heard afterwards from the quarantine-boat

that there were four or five dead of Cholera on board, whom they wanted to send on shore to be buried, but this was refused as dangerous! then to be permitted to sink them in the sea—this was still less to be allowed. They begged for a doctor—no one would go: *guardiani* even would not go on board, for any compensation, and they rowed away, leaving her to her fate. We shortly after received an intimation that by reason of this new arrival, all ships in quarantine at that time must stay fourteen days more!

My own wrath at Greek inhumanity had been already so largely excited that I could get no angrier at this new tyranny—in fact, I thought more of the steamer and its already half-starved and, even, in some cases, dying people, than of myself; and if I had had the pestilence in the hollow of my hand, I should, I fear, have visited Syra as Egypt never was visited. But the most appalling thought was of that luckless ship with Death holding revel on her, and the living bound to the dead.

Here was the ship of the ancient mariner, in sooth—anchored only, but with anchors almost useless on that tranquil sea, the fiery sun above, and the glassy water below, and nothing to break that awful monotony but the merciless quarantine-boat coming to ask and refuse. We could see the people on the ship gather on the forecastle and in the rigging, looking out to the land, which, brown and dry as it was, was to them a refuge. The second and the third day came, and the dead multiplied, until ten or a dozen corpses were on board. Still no physician, no landing, no burial even; and the plague-stricken ship and its dying cargo lay still under the August sun. The third day the crew received permission to put the bodies overboard, tied with ropes, that they might not drift away and carry to some accursed Greek community the plague it merited. I may be unjust, but those days have made me detest and abhor the very name of Syra and its people. We saw the dead lowered overboard, one by one, and with glasses could see them floating alongside, horrible to sight and fancy.

I am only dealing with facts,—facts which will be confirmed by the testimony of many who passed those broiling August days in that quarantine. No physician could be found in Syra who had humanity enough to hear the cry of that suffering company, or venture on the plague-stricken ship. They did finally get permission to bury the dead, all but one mother and child, who drifted loose, and was cast on some unknown shore, or fed the fishes; and finally a Danish physician came, a volunteer from—I regret to say I know not where, nor even do I know his name. I did not think then to enable myself to render him the honour he deserves; and finally the sick were landed. There had been a hundred and forty passengers on board when the ship left Alexandria, and there were over a hundred when she came to quarantine—the untouched remaining on board until they were attacked in their turn, and were carried ashore to die. Their provisions, too, were failing, and at last starvation came to help the pestilence.

I sought distraction and pastime amongst the sailors, of whom

two had attracted my attention during the run over. One of them I judged to be an American at first sight, the incarnation of "go-a-head" and nervous energy. I had seen him at the wheel the first day out, as I sat aft taking my fruit after dinner, and tempted him to affability by a huge slice of melon, which he ate without ever taking his eye for more than an instant from the course of the yacht. The next day they were apples that broke the silence; when, abruptly turning round to me, he asked if I was a freemason. He was, and evidently did not understand how one could treat a sailor with courtesy or kindness without some such motive as that mystic brotherhood is supposed to furnish. He wore a black wide-awake crowded close down to his eyes, which looked sharp out from under black, clear-drawn eyebrows. His nose was prominent, pointed, and straight, and his mouth full of decision; lips close-pressed, and chin small and slightly retreating. He carried his head habitually a little forward, as if on the look-out, and reminded me in his *ensemble* more of a clipper than anything I ever saw in flesh. He was taciturn, however, and absolutely refused to talk of himself. The other, who responded to the name of Bill, was certainly one of the best examples of the English sailor I have ever met,—robust, thick-set, with large brain and full beard, a frank blue eye, and an off-hand manner familiar to all who permitted it, but respectful to the highest degree, and speaking the English of a man who had had some education. In the first days of our imprisonment he had surprised me not a little by offering to lend me some old numbers of reviews and magazines, written on the margins of which I found some shrewd comments, and with some bits of drawing. I am not going to write his story, and shall not repeat what I learned of a life ruined by an uncontrollable spirit of adventure and unimproved opportunities; I have only to do with him now as he wove himself into the web of our quarantine life.

It was from Bill that I learned what I first knew of Aleck; that he was, as I had supposed, an American, had been in the Confederate service, and had even served on the *Alabama*. After finding out so much, I tried hard to make him talk about himself, but in vain. He was respectful, but not communicative on any subject, and least so on himself. But the new excitement of the Cholera-ship and its horrors made a certain difference. I certainly felt more like getting near my fellow-men, and they, and especially Aleck, were more oblivious of the difference between them and me. The immediate cause of the breaking of the ice was the sight of a poor woman standing on the poop of the Cholera-ship as she drifted towards us from her anchorage, before a slight easterly air, that brought the woman's voice down to us in supplications which we could from time to time partially distinguish, and which were for bread, bread, bread! We could see others on board climbing on the bulwarks, standing on the poop or forecastle, according to the end of the ship which drifted nearest us; but we could hear no other voice, though we doubted not that many were joined with hers. Beside her we saw, later, another female figure, whom,

by the aid of the glass, I believed I could make out to be her daughter. The latter made no sound that we could hear, but sat mutely or stood with her arm around the other, while ever and anon we heard that heartrending cry, "*Psomé! psomé!* (bread! bread!)" At sunset that day we were all together on the forecastle, better friends through our common pity. We proposed to our taciturn *guardiano* to send some bread on board the ship, but he absolutely refused to lend himself to any such risk of contagion, and forbade any attempt to communicate either with the ship or the shore where the sick were; and to tell the truth, it was not pleasant to contemplate the chances of being put in quarantine for an additional indefinite term, for having, even in a kindly work, come in real or fancied contact with the disease. But as the authority of the *guardiano* was absolute, we could do nothing in the matter openly, though it was determined in council by us three to do something in some way, if relief was not brought soon.

From the forecastle next morning we saw in the early light the two hapless creatures in the same position. Bill, looking over into the water thoughtfully, asked if there were many sharks in those waters. I replied that I had never seen but one, inquiring why he asked. "Why," said he, "I think I could get some grub over to those women, if you could manage the *guardiano*." "It isn't much of a swim," I replied, "but as to carrying the prog, you will find that more difficult." "Well," said he, "I have carried a pretty good load in the water before now, and can float enough to keep those women from starving. I lived in the Sandwich Islands once, and though I don't stand out of the water like a Kanaka, I have carried my clothes on my head many a mile without wetting them, and a few pounds of bread won't sink me." Here his eye twinkled as if he had a story to tell, and I waited for it. "I commanded a lorcha transport during the last war in China," he began, after a moment, "and one day, while we were in Canton, I was walking through one of the streets with my mate, an Englishman, and we stopped to look in a joss-house. There was a joss there of pure silver, about fourteen inches high, and I made up my mind to have him. We two were the only Europeans on board, and the first dark stormy night we took the boat and went ashore well armed. The joss-house had no guard but the priests, and the night was so bad that we broke the door down and got in without the outsiders knowing it, and carried the joss off easily enough; but the next day we had row enough to pay for it. Every vessel in the river was searched, and if I had had him on board, he would have been found, and we should have caught it, for the officers were in earnest about it, and the Chinese in a fury. I knew there would be the d—l to pay in the morning, so I put a cord around his neck, and went down and hung him to the lower pintle of the rudder, and left him there till the hue-and-cry was over, and then brought it up. It weighed forty-two pounds. I think I could do more in this case than then." "Do it then," said I; "I'll help you all I can: but we won't let the captain or any of the men know of it!" "Oh, I'll put that

all right," said Aleck; "Jones has the first watch to-night, and I'll change with him, and as for the *guardiano*, he's a sleepy cuss, and I reckon won't give himself the trouble to look on deck after he turns in—he never has, any way; and if you'd like to keep watch with me, sir, I think we can manage it." "But, Bill," I added, "look out for the *guarda-costa*: if they see anything in the water moving between the vessels, they'll fire at it, certainly." "That won't trouble me," replied the imperturbable tar. "I have run the blockade in the American war thirteen times, and had bigger balls than that fellow can throw, whizzing about my head, and fired by better gunners than they have got aboard there. Why, sir, we ran almost into one of their Monitors one night, and had eight 15-inch shot fired at us without being hit, and in all the thirteen trips in and out, we never were hit but once—and then the ball only took off the head of the look-out forward."

And so we arranged it that Bill should swim off to the ship as soon as it was dark, and trusting to fortune to get the provisions aboard without discovery, we were to hang overboard a light for him to swim back to.

"That ship reminds me," said Bill, after a long pause, "of a trip I made once in an English ship to Senegal. We went up the river to load, and while we lay there waiting for cargo to come down, we had one of the worst yellow fevers break out on the ship I ever saw. The first man who was taken with it died in three hours, and that day two more were taken and died before dark, and in three days we lost all but seven of the crew one after the other—not one was sick more than six hours—and then the mate was taken sick. The first thing I knew of it was that he said to me, 'Bill, give me a good glass of grog, and fill my pipe; I want one good smoke and a drink before I die.' 'Oh, nonsense,' says I, 'you are no more likely to die than I am.' 'I know very well I have got it,' said he; 'and when I am dead bury me deep enough so that the land crabs can't dig me up.' Sure enough he died that afternoon, and we took him ashore before night and buried him in a good deep grave. In two days more there were only the captain and I alive on the ship. And there we lay ten days till we heard that an English man-of-war was off the mouth of the river, and the captain sent a native boat down to ask him to send up men to work the ship out of the river. The man-of-war sent word that they wouldn't send men up the river, but if we could work her down with natives, they would give us men to get the ship home to England, and so we got out, but a deuce of a time we had of it getting down. I suppose they feel on that ship pretty much as I did those ten days."

All day long we heard at intervals that pitiful cry, "Bread! Bread!" faintly coming over the water. It was more tolerable than the day before, because we knew that relief would go with nightfall. And so, as the dark came, we made up a packet of hard bread with a little cold meat and a bottle of wine, and binding it securely between Bill's shoulders, and with a pointed stick on top of it, in case, as he said, "a shark should want to take the prog from him," he slipped down into the water, stripped



to his drawers, and struck out for the Cholera-ship so quietly that you might have thought it a little school of guard-fish.

We sat on the fore-castle watching and waiting. I said nothing, and where two are together and one will not talk, the other sometimes will. Aleck finally broke silence with—"Women are mighty curious things. I'll bet that old one don't touch a mouthful till t'other has eaten, and I don't believe she would have made half the fuss she did if she had been alone. In the beginning of the American war I belonged to a regiment of mounted riflemen, and we were sent into Eastern Tennessee, where there was a good deal of bush-whacking about that time. We were picketed one day in a line about two miles long across country, and I was on the extreme left. I took my saddle off, holsters and all, and hung it on a branch of a peach-tree, and my carbine on another. We knew there were no Yankees near, and so I was kind o' off guard, eating peaches. By-and-by I saw a young woman coming down to where I was, on horseback. She wanted to know if there were many of the boys near, and if they would buy some milk of her if she took it down to them. I said I thought they would, and took about a quart myself; and as she hadn't much more, I emptied the water out of my canteen and took the rest. Says she, 'If you'll come up to the house yonder, I've got something better than that: you may have some good peach brandy—some of your fellows might like a little.' I said I'd go, and she says, 'You needn't take your saddle or carbine, it's just a step, and they are safe enough here—there's nobody about.' So I mounted bare-back, and she led the way. When we passed the bars where she came in, she says, 'You ride on a step, and I'll get down and put up the bars.' I went on, and as she came up behind, she says pretty sharp, 'Ride a little faster, if you please.' I looked round and she had a revolver pointed straight at my head, and I saw that she knew how to use it. I had left everything behind me like a fool, and had to give in and obey orders. 'That's the house, if you please,' she says, and showed me a house in the edge of the woods a quarter of a mile away. We got there, and she told me to get down and eat something, for she was going to give me a long ride—into the Yankee lines, about twenty miles away. Her father came out and abused me like a thief, and told me that he was going to have me sent into the Federal lines to be hung. It seems he had had a son hung the week before by some of the Confederates, and was going to have his revenge out of me. I ate pretty well, for I thought I might need it before I got any more, and then the old fellow began to curse me and abuse me like anything. He said he would shoot me on the spot if it wasn't that he'd rather have me hung; and instead of giving me my own horse, he took the worst one he had in his stables, and they put me on that with my feet tied together under his belly. Luckily they didn't tie my hands, for they thought I had no arms, and couldn't help myself; but I always carried a small revolver in my shirt bosom. The girl kept too sharp watch on me for me to use it. She never turned her revolver from me, and I knew that the first suspicious move I made I was a dead man. We went

about ten miles in this way, when my old crow-bait gave out and wouldn't go any further. She wouldn't trust me afoot, and so had to give up her own horse, but she kept the bridle in her own hands, and walked ahead with one eye turned back on me, and the revolver cocked with her finger on the trigger, so that I never had a chance to put my hand in my bosom. We finally came to a spring, and she asked me if I wanted to drink: I didn't feel much like drinking, but I said yes, and so she let me down. I put my head down to the water, and at the same time put my hand down where the revolver was, and pulled it forward where I could put my hand on it easily; but she was on the watch and I couldn't pull it out. I mounted again, and the first time she was off her guard a little, I fired and broke the arm she held the pistol in. 'Now,' says I, 'it's my turn: you'll please get on that horse and we'll go back. She didn't flinch or say a word, but got on the horse, and I tied her legs as they had mine, and we went back to the house. The old man he heard us come up to the door and looked out of the window. He turned as pale as a sheet and ran for his rifle. I knew what he was after, and pushed the door in before he was loaded. Says I, 'You may put that shooting-iron down and come with me.' He wasn't as brave as the girl, but it was no use to resist, and he knew it; so he came along. About half-way back we met some of our fellows who had missed me, and come out to look me up. They took them both, and —," he paused a moment, and lowering his tone, added, "I don't know what they did with them, but I know d—— well what they would have done with me." I replied after a pause, "I suppose they hanged them both?" Aleck nodded his head without looking up, and seemed anxious to drop the subject.

"But," said I, rather disposed to work the vein of communicativeness, but not anxious to hear any more *such* adventures, "I thought you had been in the Confederate navy?" "I was," said Aleck. "I was with Semmes everywhere he went; I was in the naval brigade and blockade-running, and on the *Alabama* all the while he commanded her." "But not when she sank, I suppose?" I rejoined. "Well, I was, and was picked up with him by the *Deerhound*." "It was a pretty sharp fight, wasn't it," I suggestingly asked. "It was that," replied Aleck, but he didn't care about enlarging. "I suppose it was the eleven-inch shells that did her business?" "Oh, no," said he, coming to a kind of confessional, "we never had any chance; we had no gunners to compare with the *Kearsage's*. Our gunners fired by routine, and when they had the gun loaded, fired it off blind. They never changed the elevation of their guns all the fight, and the *Kearsage* was working up to us all the while, taking advantage of every time she was hid by smoke to work a little nearer, and then her gunners took aim for every shot." "Then it isn't true that the *Alabama* tried to board the *Kearsage*?" "No, sir; she did her best to get away from her from the time the fight commenced: we knew well that if we got in range of her Dahlgren howitzers she would sink us in ten minutes." "But," I asked, "don't you believe that Semmes

supposed he would whip the *Kearsage* when he went out to fight her?" "No: he was bullied into it, and took good care to leave all his valuables on shore, and had a life-preserver on through the fight. I saw him put it on, and I thought if it was wise in him it wouldn't be foolish in me, and I put one on too. When Semmes saw that the ship was going down, he told us all to swim who could, and was one of the first to jump into the water, and we all made for the *Deerhound*. I was a long way ahead of Semmes, and when I came up to the *Deerhound's* boat they asked me if I was Semmes before they would take me in. I said I wasn't, and then they asked me what I was on the *Alabama*. Said I, 'No matter what I was on the *Alabama*, I shall be a dead man soon if you don't take me in.' They asked me again if I was an officer or a seaman, and wouldn't take me in until I told them that I was an officer." "But," said I, "did they actually refuse to pick up common seamen, and leave them to drown?" "They did that," replied he wrathfully, and probably not very correctly; "and as soon as they had Semmes on board they made tracks as fast as they knew how, and left everybody else to drown or be picked up by the *Kearsage*."

"Time to show the light, I reckon," said Aleck, after his ebullition had subsided, and proceeded to put over the bows the light agreed on. An hour after Bill had started on his voyage we heard his whistle from below the forechains, and heaving him a line brought him in cautiously. He slipped down to change his clothing and add to it, and then came up to render an account of his doings. He had, as he anticipated, found more difficulty in getting on board the ship than in getting to it. He had found the poor women on the quarter-deck—all order and shipkeeping abandoned, and no look-out anywhere. The passengers were sleeping on deck or sitting around it, moaning and weeping. He dared not call to the women for fear of disturbing the *guardiani*, and of attracting the attention of the other passengers to whom his small supply would have been but a mouthful. He swam round and round looking for a loose rope's-end in vain, and finally did what we should have supposed certain to lead to his discovery—climbed up the cable and over the bows, throwing over his shoulders the first garment he found on the disorderly deck, and slowly walked the whole length of the ship: when, having deposited the provisions at the side of the unfortunate ones, signifying that they were to inform no one and keep them to themselves, as well as his few words of Greek would let him, he dropped overboard by a line from the quarter, and leaving them in mute and motionless wonder, came back as quietly as he had gone. Bill couldn't resist the temptation next morning of waving a big white cloth at the ship, a signal which attracted the immediate attention and suspicion of our watchful *guardiano*, who, with an effervescence of useless Greek, delivered his mind on the subject of *contumacia* and communication, at which we all laughed: we felt merrier that morning than for many days past.

In fact, though we saw for several days more the boat going back and

forwards from the ship to the shore, and knew that they went to bury the dead, could see them buried even with our glasses, we never felt so oppressed by the horror of it since Bill's chivalric swim. We finished without other incident our appointed two weeks, and had soon the satisfaction of knowing that public clamour had obliged Syra to recognize the claims of humanity, and send food to the starving.

We had to undergo a five days' "observation" behind the lighthouse island off the port, in company with the English steamer, which was, moreover, threatened with a third fortnight; which she escaped only by the energetic remonstrances of the British consul, backed up by the Legation at Athens, who persuaded the central government to send orders to Syra that the steamer should be admitted to pratique. A Greek man-of-war was accordingly sent from the Piræus to Syra with a commission to ascertain the truth of the complaints of Mr. Lloyd, and finding them well-founded, ordered the admittance of the steamer to pratique; but so great was the terror of the population and the timidity of the commission, that the latter ceded to the threats of a revolution, and compromised on admitting the passengers to the lazaretto of Syra and sending the ship away. If all these things are not recorded in the chronicles of that city, they are in the minds of many who were martyrs to the inhuman cowardice of Syra, and who will bear me testimony that every occurrence of which public recognition could be taken in the above narrative is strictly true. As for the yarns, I tell them, as nearly as I can remember, as they were told me, and—believe them.

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# Armada.

## BOOK THE FOURTH.

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### MISS GWILT'S DIARY.

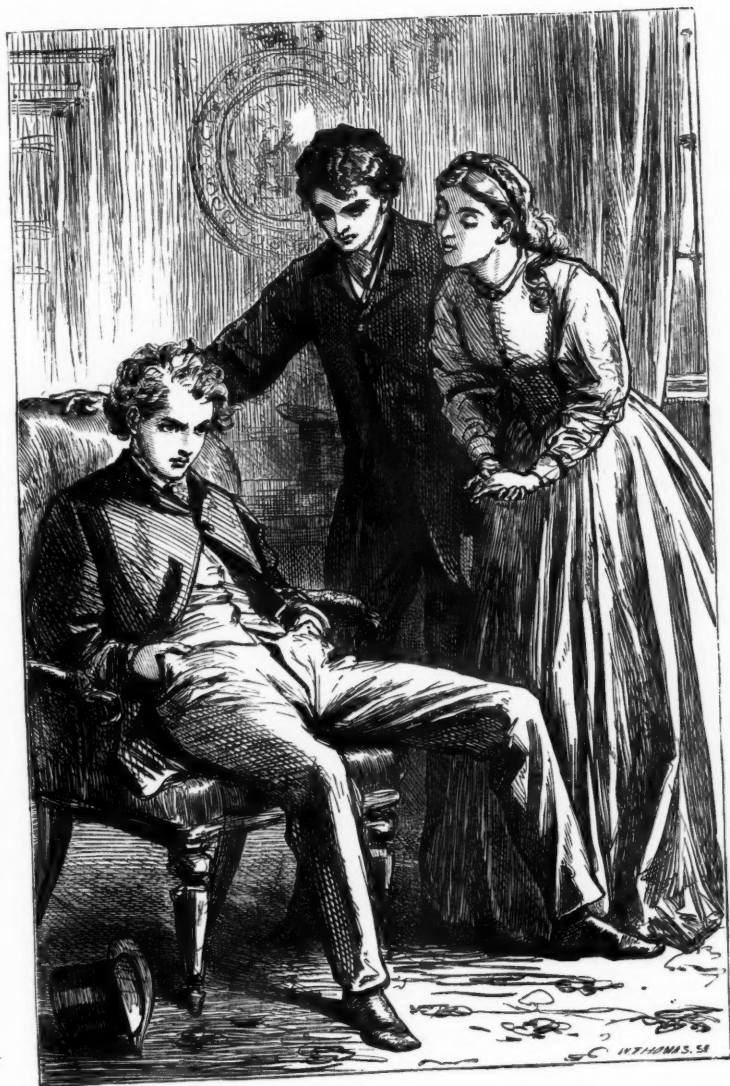


*I.L. Saints' Terrace, New Road, London, July 28th, Monday night.*—I can hardly hold my head up, I am so tired. But, in my situation, I dare not trust anything to memory. Before I go to bed, I must write my customary record of the events of the day.

"So far, the turn of luck in my favour (it was long enough before it took the turn!) seems likely to continue. I succeeded in forcing Armadale—the brute required nothing short of forcing!—to leave Thorpe-Ambrose for London, alone in the same carriage with me, before all the people in the station. There was a full attendance of dealers in small scandal, all staring hard at us, and all evidently drawing their own

conclusions. Either I knew nothing of Thorpe-Ambrose—or the town-gossip is busy enough by this time with Mr. Armadale and Miss Gwilt.

I had some difficulty with him for the first half-hour after we left the station. The guard (delightful man! I felt so grateful to him!) had shu' us up together in expectation of half-a-crown at the end of the journey. Armadale was suspicious of me, and he showed it plainly. Little by little I tamed my wild beast—partly by taking care to display no curiosity about his journey to town, and partly by interesting him on the subject of his friend Midwinter; dwelling especially on the opportunity that now offered itself for a reconciliation between them. I kept harping on this string till I set his tongue going, and made him amuse me as a gentleman is bound



THE END OF THE ELOPEMENT.



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to do when he has the honour of escorting a lady on a long railway journey.

"What little mind he has was full, of course, of his own affairs and Miss Milroy's. No words can express the clumsiness he showed in trying to talk about himself, without taking me into his confidence or mentioning Miss Milroy's name. He was going to London, he gravely informed me, on a matter of indescribable interest to him. It was a secret for the present, but he hoped to tell it me soon; it had made a great difference already in the way in which he looked at the slanders spoken of him in Thorpe-Ambrose; he was too happy to care what the scandal-mongers said of him now, and he should soon stop their mouths by appearing in a new character that would surprise them all. So he blundered on, with the firm persuasion that he was keeping me quite in the dark. It was hard not to laugh, when I thought of my anonymous letter on its way to the major; but I managed to control myself—though, I must own, with some difficulty. As the time wore on, I began to feel a terrible excitement: the position was, I think, a little too much for me. There I was, alone with him, talking in the most innocent, easy, familiar manner, and having it in my mind all the time, to brush his life out of my way, when the moment comes, as I might brush a stain off my gown. It made my blood leap, and my cheeks flush. I caught myself laughing once or twice much louder than I ought—and long before we got to London I thought it desirable to put my face in hiding by pulling down my veil.

"There was no difficulty, on reaching the terminus, in getting him to come in the cab with me to the hotel where Midwinter is staying. He was all eagerness to be reconciled with his dear friend—principally, I have no doubt, because he wants the dear friend to lend a helping hand to the elopement. The real difficulty lay, of course, with Midwinter. My sudden journey to London had allowed me no opportunity of writing to combat his superstitious conviction that he and his former friend are better apart. I thought it wise to leave Armadale in the cab at the door, and to go into the hotel by myself to pave the way for him.

Fortunately, Midwinter had not gone out. His delight at seeing me some days sooner than he had hoped, had something infectious in it, I suppose. Pooh! I may own the truth to my own diary! There was a moment when I forgot everything in the world but our two selves as completely as he did. I felt as if I was back in my 'teens—until I remembered the lout in the cab at the door. And then I was five-and-thirty again in an instant.

"His face altered when he heard who was below, and what it was I wanted of him—he looked, not angry but distressed. He yielded, however, before long, not to my reasons, for I gave him none, but to my entreaties. His old fondness for his friend might possibly have had some share in persuading him against his will—but my own opinion is that he acted entirely under the influence of his fondness for Me.

I waited in the sitting-room while he went down to the door; so I

knew nothing of what passed between them when they first saw each other again. But, oh, the difference between the two men when the interval had passed, and they came upstairs together and joined me. They were both agitated, but in such different ways! The hateful Armadale, so loud and red and clumsy; the dear, loveable Midwinter, so pale and quiet, with such a gentleness in his voice when he spoke, and such tenderness in his eyes every time they turned my way. Armadale overlooked me as completely as if I had not been in the room. *He* referred to me over and over again in the conversation; *he* constantly looked at me to see what I thought, while I sat in my corner silently watching them; *he* wanted to go with me and see me safe to my lodgings, and spare me all trouble with the cabman and the luggage. When I thanked him and declined, Armadale looked unaffectedly relieved at the prospect of seeing my back turned, and of having his friend all to himself. I left him, with his awkward elbows half over the table, scrawling a letter (no doubt to Miss Milroy), and shouting to the waiter that he wanted a bed at the hotel. I had calculated on his staying as a matter of course where he found his friend staying. It was pleasant to find my anticipations realized, and to know that I have as good as got him now under my own eye.

"After promising to let Midwinter know where he could see me to-morrow, I went away in the cab to hunt for lodgings by myself.

"With some difficulty I have succeeded in getting an endurable sitting-room and bedroom in this house, where the people are perfect strangers to me. Having paid a week's rent in advance (for I naturally preferred dispen-  
sation with a reference), I find myself with exactly three shillings and ninepence left in my purse. It is impossible to ask Midwinter for money, after he has already paid Mrs. Oldershaw's note of hand. 'I must borrow something to-morrow on my watch and chain at the pawnbroker's. Enough to keep me going for a fortnight is all, and more than all, that I want. In that time, or in less than that time, Midwinter will have married me.

"*July 29th. Two o'clock.*—Early in the morning I sent a line to Midwinter, telling him that he would find me here at three this afternoon. That done, I devoted the morning to two errands of my own. One is hardly worth mentioning—it was only to raise money on my watch and chain. I got more than I expected; and more (even supposing I buy myself one or two little things in the way of cheap summer dress) than I am at all likely to spend before the wedding-day.

"The other errand was of a far more serious kind. It led me into an attorney's office.

"I was well aware last night (though I was too weary to put it down in my diary), that I could not possibly see Midwinter this morning—in the position he now occupies towards me—without at least *appearing* to take him into my confidence, on the subject of myself and my circumstances. Excepting one necessary consideration which I must be careful not to overlook, there is not the least difficulty in my drawing on my

invention, and telling him any story I please—for thus far I have told no story to anybody. Midwinter went away to London before it was possible to approach the subject. As to the Milroys (having provided them with the customary reference), I could fortunately keep them at arm's length on all questions relating purely to myself. And lastly, when I effected my reconciliation with Armadale on the drive in front of the house, he was fool enough to be too generous to let me defend my character. When I had expressed my regret for having lost my temper and threatened Miss Milroy, and when I had accepted his assurance that my pupil had never done or meant to do me any injury, he was too magnanimous to hear a word on the subject of my private affairs. Thus, I am quite unfettered by any former assertions of my own; and I may tell any story I please—with the one drawback hinted at already in the shape of a restraint. Whatever I may invent in the way of pure fiction, I must preserve the character in which I have appeared at Thorpe-Ambrose—for, with the notoriety that is attached to *my other name*, I have no other choice but to marry Midwinter in my maiden name as 'Miss Gwilt.'

"This was the consideration that took me into the lawyer's office. I felt that I must inform myself, before I saw Midwinter later in the day, of any awkward consequences that may follow the marriage of a widow, if she conceals her widow's name.

"Knowing of no other professional person whom I could trust, I went boldly to the lawyer who had my interests in his charge, at that terrible past time in my life, which I have more reason than ever to shrink from thinking of now. He was astonished, and, as I could plainly detect, by no means pleased to see me. I had hardly opened my lips, before he said he hoped I was not consulting him *again* (with a strong emphasis on the word) on my own account. I took the hint, and put the question I had come to ask, in the interests of that accommodating personage on such occasions—an absent friend. The lawyer evidently saw through it at once; but he was sharp enough to turn my 'friend' to good account on his side. He said he would answer the question as a matter of courtesy towards a lady represented by myself; but he must make it a condition that this consultation of him by deputy should go no further.

"I accepted his terms—for I really respected the clever manner in which he contrived to keep me at arm's length without violating the laws of good breeding. In two minutes I heard what he had to say, mastered it in my own mind, and went out.

"Short as it was, the consultation told me everything I wanted to know. I risk nothing by marrying Midwinter in my maiden instead of my widow's name. The marriage is a good marriage in this way:—that it can only be set aside if my husband finds out the imposture, and takes proceedings to invalidate our marriage in my lifetime. That is the lawyer's answer in the lawyer's own words. It relieves me at once—in this direction at any rate—of all apprehension about the future. The

only imposture my husband will ever discover—and then only if he happens to be on the spot—is the imposture that puts me in the place, and gives me the income, of Armadale's widow; and, by that time, I shall have invalidated my own marriage for ever.

"Half-past two! Midwinter will be here in half an hour. I must go and ask my glass how I look. I must rouse my invention, and make up my little domestic romance. Am I feeling nervous about it? Something flutters in the place where my heart used to be. At five and thirty, too! and after such a life as mine!

*Six o'clock.*—He has just gone. The day for our marriage is a day determined on already.

"I have tried to rest, and recover myself. I can't rest. I have come back to these leaves. There is much to be written in them since Midwinter has been here, that concerns me nearly.

"Let me begin with what I hate most to remember, and so be the sooner done with it—let me begin with the paltry string of falsehoods I told him about my family troubles.

"What *can* be the secret of this man's hold on me? How is it that he alters me so that I hardly know myself again? I was like myself in the railway carriage yesterday with Armadale. It was surely frightful to be talking to the living man, through the whole of that long journey, with the knowledge in me all the while that I meant to be his widow—and yet I was only excited and fevered. Hour after hour I never shrunk once from speaking to Armadale—but the first trumpety falsehood I told Midwinter, turned me cold when I saw that he believed it! I felt a dreadful hysterical choking in the throat when he entreated me not to reveal my troubles. And once—I am horrified when I think of it—once, when he said, 'If I *could* love you more dearly, I should love you more dearly, now,' I was within a hair's breadth of turning traitor to myself. I was on the very point of crying out to him, 'Lies! all lies! I'm a fiend in human shape! Marry the wretchedest creature that prowls the streets, and you will marry a better woman than me!' Yes! the seeing his eyes moisten, the hearing his voice tremble while I was deceiving him, shook me in that way. I have seen handsomer men by hundreds, cleverer men by hundreds. What can this man have roused in me? Is it Love? I thought I *had* loved, never to love again. Does a woman not love, when the man's hardness to her drives her to drown herself? A man drove *me* to that last despair in days gone by. Did all my misery at that time come from something which was not Love? Have I lived to be five and thirty, and am I only feeling, now, what Love really is?—now, when it is too late? Ridiculous! Besides, what is the use of asking? What do I know about it? What does any woman ever know? The more we think of it, the more we deceive ourselves. I wish I had been born an animal. My beauty might have been of some use to me then—it might have got me a good master.

"Here is a whole page of my diary filled ; and nothing written yet that is of the slightest use to me ! My miserable made-up story must be told over again here, while the incidents are fresh in my memory—or how am I to refer to it consistently on after-occasions when I may be obliged to speak of it again ?

"There was nothing new in what I told him : it was the commonplace rubbish of the circulating libraries. A dead father ; a lost fortune ; vagabond brothers, whom I dread ever seeing again ; a bedridden mother dependent on my exertions—No ! I can't write it down ! I hate myself, I despise myself, when I remember that *he* believed it because I said it—that *he* was distressed by it, because it was my story ! I will face the chances of contradicting myself—I will risk discovery and ruin—anything rather than dwell on that contemptible deception of him a moment longer.

"My lies came to an end at last. And then he talked to me of himself, and of his prospects. Oh, what a relief it was to turn to that, at the time ! What a relief it is to come to it now !

"He has accepted the offer about which he wrote to me at Thorpe-Ambrose ; and he is now engaged as occasional foreign correspondent to the new newspaper. His first destination is Naples. I wish it had been some other place, for I have certain past associations with Naples which I am not at all anxious to renew. It has been arranged that he is to leave England not later than the eleventh of next month. By that time, therefore, I, who am to go with him, must go with him as his wife.

"There is not the slightest difficulty about the marriage. All this part of it is so easy, that I begin to dread an accident. The proposal to keep the thing strictly private—which it might have embarrassed me to make—comes from him. Marrying me in his own name—the name that he has kept concealed from every living creature but myself and Mr. Brock—it is his interest that not a soul who knows him should be present at the ceremony ; his friend Armadale least of all. He has been a week in London already. When another week has passed, he proposes to get the Licence, and to be married in the church belonging to the parish in which the hotel is situated. These are the only necessary formalities. I had but to say 'Yes' (he told me), and to feel no further anxiety about the future. I said 'Yes,' with such a devouring anxiety about the future, that I was afraid he would see it. What minutes the next few minutes were, when he whispered delicious words to me, while I hid my face on his breast !

"I recovered myself first, and led him back to the subject of Armadale ; having my own reasons for wanting to know what they said to each other, after I had left them yesterday.

"The manner in which Midwinter replied, showed me that he was speaking under the restraint of respecting a confidence placed in him by his friend. Long before he had done, I detected what the confidence was. Armadale had been consulting him (exactly as I anticipated) on the subject of the elopement. Although he appears to have remonstrated



against taking the girl secretly away from her home, Midwinter seems to have felt some delicacy about speaking strongly ; remembering (widely different as the circumstances are) that he was contemplating a private marriage himself. I gathered, at any rate, that he had produced very little effect by what he had said ; and that Armadale had already carried out his absurd intention of consulting the head-clerk in the office of his London lawyers.

"Having got as far as this, Midwinter put the question which I felt must come sooner or later. He asked if I objected to our engagement being mentioned in the strictest secrecy to his friend.

" 'I will answer,' he said, 'for Allan's respecting any confidence that I place in him. And I will undertake, when the time comes, so to use my influence over him as to prevent his being present at the marriage, and discovering (what he must never know) that my name is the same as his own. It would help me,' he went on, 'to speak more strongly about the object that has brought him to London, if I can requite the frankness with which he has spoken of his private affairs to me, by the same frankness on my side.'

"I had no choice but to give the necessary permission, and I gave it. It is of the utmost importance to me to know what course Major Milroy takes with his daughter and Armadale, after receiving my anonymous letter ; and, unless I invite Armadale's confidence in some way, I am nearly certain to be kept in the dark. Let him once be trusted with the knowledge that I am to be Midwinter's wife ; and what he tells his friend about his love-affair, he will tell me.

"When it had been understood between us that Armadale was to be taken into our confidence, we began to talk about ourselves again. How the time flew ! What a sweet enchantment it was to forget everything in his arms ! How he loves me !—ah, poor fellow, how he loves me !

"I have promised to meet him to-morrow morning in the Regent's Park. The less he is seen here the better. The people in this house are strangers to me certainly—but it may be wise to consult appearances, as if I was still at Thorpe-Ambrose, and not to produce the impression, even on their minds, that Midwinter is engaged to me. If any after-inquiries are made, when I have run my grand risk, the testimony of my London landlady might be testimony worth having.

"That wretched old Bashwood ! Writing of Thorpe-Ambrose reminds me of him. What will he say when the town-gossip tells him that Armadale has taken me to London, in a carriage reserved for ourselves ? It really is too absurd in a man of Bashwood's age and appearance to presume to be in love ! . . . . .

"*July 30th.* News at last ! Armadale has heard from Miss Milroy. My anonymous letter has produced its effect. The girl is removed from Thorpe-Ambrose already ; and the whole project of the elopement is blown to the winds at once and for ever. This was the substance of

what Midwinter had to tell me, when I met him in the Park. I affected to be excessively astonished, and to feel the necessary feminine longing to know all the particulars. 'Not that I expect to have my curiosity satisfied,' I added, 'for Mr. Armadale and I are little better than mere acquaintances, after all.'

"'You are far more than a mere acquaintance in Allan's eyes,' said Midwinter. 'Having your permission to trust him, I have already told him how near and dear you are to me.'

"Hearing this, I thought it desirable, before I put any questions about Miss Milroy, to attend to my own interests first, and to find out what effect the announcement of my coming marriage had produced on Armadale. It was possible that he might be still suspicious of me, and that the inquiries he made in London, at Mrs. Milroy's instigation, might be still hanging on his mind.

"'Did Mr. Armadale seem surprised,' I asked, 'when you told him of our engagement, and when you said it was to be kept a secret from everybody?'

"'He seemed greatly surprised,' said Midwinter, 'to hear that we were going to be married. All he said when I told him it must be kept a secret was, that he supposed there were family reasons on your side for making the marriage a private one.'

"'What did you say,' I inquired, 'when he made that remark?'

"'I said the family reasons were on my side,' answered Midwinter. 'And I thought it right to add—considering that Allan had allowed himself to be misled by the ignorant distrust of you at Thorpe-Ambrose—that you had confided to me the whole of your sad family story, and that you had amply justified your unwillingness, under any ordinary circumstances, to speak of your private affairs.'

("I breathed freely again. He had said just what was wanted, just in the right way.)

"'Thank you,' I said, 'for putting me right in your friend's estimation. Does he wish to see me?' I added, by way of getting back to the other subject of Miss Milroy and the elopement.

"'He is longing to see you,' returned Midwinter. 'He is in great distress, poor fellow—distress which I have done my best to soothe, but which I believe would yield far more readily to a woman's sympathy than to mine.'

"'Where is he now?' I asked.

"'He was at the hotel; and to the hotel I instantly proposed that we should go. It is a busy, crowded place; and (with my veil down) I have less fear of compromising myself there than at my quiet lodgings. Besides, it is vitally important to me to know what Armadale does next, under this total change of circumstances,—for I must so control his proceedings as to get him away from England if I can. We took a cab: such was my eagerness to sympathize with the heart-broken lover, that we took a cab!

"Anything so ridiculous as Armadale's behaviour under the double shock of discovering that his young lady has been taken away from him, and that I am to be married to Midwinter, I never before witnessed in all my experience. To say that he was like a child is a libel on all children who are not born idiots. He congratulated me on my coming marriage, and execrated the unknown wretch who had written the anonymous letter, little thinking that he was speaking of one and the same person in one and the same breath. Now he submissively acknowledged that Major Milroy had his rights as a father, and now he reviled the major as having no feeling for anything but his mechanics and his clock. At one moment he started up, with the tears in his eyes, and declared that his 'darling Neelie' was an angel on earth. At another he sat down sulkily, and thought that a girl of her spirit might have run away on the spot and joined him in London. After a good half-hour of this absurd exhibition, I succeeded in quieting him; and then a few words of tender inquiry produced what I had expressly come to the hotel to see—Miss Milroy's letter.

"It was outrageously long and rambling and confused—in short, the letter of a fool. I had to wade through plenty of vulgar sentiment and lamentation, and to lose time and patience over maudlin outbursts of affection, and nauseous kisses enclosed in circles of ink. However, I contrived to extract the information I wanted at last; and here it is:—

"The major, on receipt of my anonymous warning, appears to have sent at once for his daughter, and to have shown her the letter. 'You know what a hard life I lead with your mother; don't make it harder still, Neelie, by deceiving me.' That was all the poor old gentleman said. I always did like the major; and, though he was afraid to show it, I know he always liked me. His appeal to his daughter (if *her* account of it is to be believed) cut her to the heart. She burst out crying (let her alone for crying at the right moment!), and confessed everything.

"After giving her time to recover herself (if he had given her a good box on the ears it would have been more to the purpose!) the major seems to have put certain questions, and to have become convinced (as I was convinced myself) that his daughter's heart, or fancy, or whatever she calls it, was really and truly set on Armadale. The discovery evidently distressed as well as surprised him. He appears to have hesitated, and to have maintained his own unfavourable opinion of Miss Neelie's lover for some little time. But his daughter's tears and entreaties (so like the weakness of the dear old gentleman!) shook him at last. Though he firmly refused to allow of any marriage engagement at present, he consented to overlook the clandestine meetings in the park, and to put Armadale's fitness to become his son-in-law to the test, on certain conditions.

"These conditions are, that for the next six months to come, all communication is to be broken off, both personally and by writing, between Armadale and Miss Milroy. That space of time is to be occupied by the young gentleman as he himself thinks best, and by the young lady

in completing her education at school. If, when the six months have passed, they are both still of the same mind, and if Armadale's conduct in the interval has been such as to improve the major's opinion of him, he will be allowed to present himself in the character of Miss Milroy's suitor—and, in six months more, if all goes well, the marriage may take place.

"I declare I could kiss the dear old major, if I was only within reach of him! If I had been at his elbow, and had dictated the conditions myself, I could have asked for nothing better than this. Six months of total separation between Armadale and Miss Milroy! In half that time—with all communication cut off between the two—it must go hard with me indeed if I don't find myself dressed in the necessary mourning, and publicly recognized as Armadale's widow.

"But I am forgetting the girl's letter. She gives her father's reasons for making his conditions, in her father's own words. The major seems to have spoken so sensibly and so feelingly that he left his daughter no decent alternative—and he leaves Armadale no decent alternative—but to submit. As well as I can remember it, he seems to have expressed himself to Miss Neelie in these, or nearly in these terms:—

"Don't think I am behaving cruelly to you, my dear—I am merely asking you to put Mr. Armadale to the proof. It is not only right, it is absolutely necessary, that you should hold no communication with him for some time to come; and I will show you why. In the first place, if you go to school, the necessary rules in such places—necessary for the sake of the other girls—would not permit you to see Mr. Armadale, or to receive letters from him; and, if you *are* to become mistress of Thorpe-Ambrose, to school you must go, for you would be ashamed, and I should be ashamed, if you occupied the position of a lady of station, without having the accomplishments which all ladies of station are expected to possess. In the second place, I want to see whether Mr. Armadale will continue to think of you as he thinks now, without being encouraged in his attachment by seeing you, or reminded of it by hearing from you. If I am wrong in thinking him flighty and unreliable; and if your opinion of him is the right one, this is not putting the young man to an unfair test—true love survives much longer separations than a separation of six months. And when that time is over, and well over; and when I have had him under my own eye for another six months, and have learnt to think as highly of him as you do—even then, my dear, after all that terrible delay, you will still be a married woman before you are eighteen. Think of this, Neelie; and show that you love me and trust me, by accepting my proposal. I will hold no communication with Mr. Armadale myself. I will leave it to you to write and tell him what has been decided on. He may write back one letter, and one only, to acquaint you with his decision. After that, for the sake of your reputation, nothing more is to be said, and nothing more is to be done, and the matter is to be kept strictly private until the six months' interval is at an end."

"To this effect the major spoke. His behaviour to that little slut of a girl has produced a stronger impression on me than anything else in the letter. It has set me thinking (me, of all the people in the world!) of what they call 'a moral difficulty.' We are perpetually told that there can be no possible connection between virtue and vice. Can there not? Here is Major Milroy doing exactly what an excellent father, at once kind and prudent, affectionate and firm, would do under the circumstances—and by that very course of conduct, he has now smoothed the way for me, as completely as if he had been the chosen accomplice of that abominable creature, Miss Gwilt. Only think of my reasoning in this way! But I am in such good spirits, I can do anything to-day. I have not looked so bright and so young as I look now, for months past!

"To return to the letter, for the last time—it is so excessively dull and stupid that I really can't help wandering away from it into reflections of my own, as a mere relief.

"After solemnly announcing that she meant to sacrifice herself to her beloved father's wishes (the brazen assurance of her setting up for a martyr after what has happened, exceeds anything I ever heard or read of!), Miss Neelie next mentioned that the major proposed taking her to the seaside for change of air, during the few days that were still to elapse before she went to school. Armadale was to send his answer by return of post, and to address her, under cover to her father, at Lowestoft. With this, and with a last outburst of tender protestation, crammed crookedly into a corner of the page, the letter ended. (N. B.—The major's object in taking her to the seaside is plain enough. He still privately distrusts Armadale, and he is wisely determined to prevent any more clandestine meetings in the park, before the girl is safely disposed of at school.)

"When I had done with the letter—I had requested permission to read parts of it which I particularly admired, for the second and third time!—we all consulted together in a friendly way about what Armadale was to do.

"He was fool enough, at the outset, to protest against submitting to Major Milroy's conditions. He declared, with his odious red face looking the picture of brute health, that he should never survive a six months' separation from his beloved Neelie. Midwinter (as may easily be imagined) seemed a little ashamed of him, and joined me in bringing him to his senses. We showed him what would have been plain enough to anybody but a booby, that there was no honourable, or even decent, alternative left but to follow the example of submission set by the young lady. 'Wait—and you will have her for your wife,' was what I said. 'Wait—and you will force the major to alter his unjust opinion of you,' was what Midwinter added. With two clever people hammering common sense into his head at that rate, it is needless to say that his head gave way, and he submitted.

"Having decided him to accept the major's conditions (I was careful

to warn him, before he wrote to Miss Milroy, that my engagement to Midwinter was to be kept as strictly secret from her as from everybody else), the next question we had to settle related to his future proceedings. I was ready with the necessary arguments to stop him, if he had proposed returning to Thorpe-Ambrose. But he proposed nothing of the sort. On the contrary, he declared, of his own accord, that nothing would induce him to go back. The place and the people were associated with everything that was hateful to him. There would be no Miss Milroy now to meet him in the park, and no Midwinter to keep him company in the solitary house. 'I'd rather break stones on the road,' was the sensible and cheerful way in which he put it, 'than go back to Thorpe-Ambrose.'

"The first suggestion after this came from Midwinter. The sly old clergyman who gave Mrs. Oldershaw and me so much trouble, has it seems been ill; but has been latterly reported better. 'Why not go to Somersetshire,' said Midwinter; 'and see your good friend, and my good friend, Mr. Brock?'

"Armadale caught at the proposal readily enough. He longed, in the first place, to see 'dear old Brock,' and he longed, in the second place, to see his yacht. After staying a few days more in London with Midwinter, he would gladly go to Somersetshire. But what after that?

"Seeing my opportunity, I came to the rescue this time. 'You have got a yacht, Mr. Armadale,' I said; 'and you know that Midwinter is going to Italy. When you are tired of Somersetshire, why not make a voyage to the Mediterranean, and meet your friend, and your friend's wife, at Naples?'

"I made the allusion to 'his friend's wife,' with the most becoming modesty and confusion. Armadale was enchanted. I had hit on the best of all ways of occupying the weary time. He started up, and wrung my hand in quite an ecstasy of gratitude. How I do hate people who can only express their feelings by hurting other people's hands!

"Midwinter was as pleased with my proposal as Armadale; but he saw difficulties in the way of carrying it out. He considered the yacht too small for a cruise to the Mediterranean, and he thought it desirable to hire a larger vessel. His friend thought otherwise. I left them arguing the question. It was quite enough for me to have made sure, in the first place, that Armadale will not return to Thorpe-Ambrose; and to have decided him, in the second place, on going abroad. He may go how he likes. I should prefer the small yacht myself—for there seems to be a chance that the small yacht might do me the inestimable service of drowning him. . . .

"*Five o'clock.*—The excitement of feeling that I had got Armadale's future movements completely under my own control, made me so restless, when I returned to my lodgings, that I was obliged to go out again, and do something. A new interest to occupy me being what I wanted, I went to Pimlico to have it out with Mother Oldershaw.



"I walked—and made up my mind, on the way, that I would begin by quarrelling with her. One of my notes of hand being paid already, and Midwinter being willing to pay the other two when they fall due, my present position with the old wretch is as independent a one as I could desire. I always get the better of her when it comes to a downright battle between us, and find her wonderfully civil and obliging the moment I have made her feel that mine is the strongest will of the two. In my present situation, she might be of use to me in various ways, if I could secure her assistance, without trusting her with secrets which I am now more than ever determined to keep to myself. That was my idea as I walked to Pimlico. Upsetting Mother Oldershaw's nerves, in the first place, and then twisting her round my little finger, in the second, promised me, as I thought, an interesting occupation for the rest of the afternoon.

"When I got to Pimlico, a surprise was in store for me. The house was shut up—not only on Mrs. Oldershaw's side, but on Doctor Downward's as well. A padlock was on the shop-door; and a man was hanging about on the watch, who might have been an ordinary idler certainly, but who looked, to my mind, like a policeman in disguise.

"Knowing the risks the doctor runs in his particular form of practice, I suspected at once that something serious had happened, and that even cunning Mrs. Oldershaw was compromised this time. Without stopping, or making any inquiry, therefore, I called the first cab that passed me, and drove to the post-office to which I had desired my letters to be forwarded if any came for me after I left my Thorpe-Ambrose lodging.

"On inquiry a letter was produced for 'Miss Gwilt.' It was in Mother Oldershaw's handwriting, and it told me (as I had supposed) that the doctor had got into a serious difficulty—that she was herself most unfortunately mixed up in the matter—and that they were both in hiding for the present. The letter ended with some sufficiently venomous sentences about my conduct at Thorpe-Ambrose, and with a warning that I have not heard the last of Mrs. Oldershaw yet. It relieved me to find her writing in this way—for she would have been civil and cringing if she had had any suspicion of what I have really got in view. I burnt the letter as soon as the candles came up. And there, for the present, is an end of the connection between Mother Jezebel and me. I must do all my own dirty work now—and I shall be all the safer, perhaps, for trusting nobody's hands to do it but my own.

"*July 31st.*—More useful information for me. I met Midwinter again in the Park (on the pretext that my reputation might suffer, if he called too often at my lodgings); and heard the last news of Armadale, since I left the hotel yesterday.

"After he had written to Miss Milroy, Midwinter took the opportunity of speaking to him about the necessary business arrangements during his absence from the great house. It was decided that the servants should

be put on board wages, and that Mr. Bashwood should be left in charge. (Somehow, I don't like this reappearance of Mr. Bashwood in connection with my present interests, but there is no help for it.) The next question—the question of money—was settled at once by Armadale himself. All his available ready-money (a large sum) is to be lodged by Mr. Bashwood in Coutts's Bank, and to be there deposited in Armadale's name. This, he said, would save him the worry of any further letter-writing to his steward, and would enable him to get what he wanted, when he went abroad, at a moment's notice. The plan thus proposed being certainly the simplest and the safest, was adopted with Midwinter's full concurrence; and here the business discussion would have ended, if the everlasting Mr. Bashwood had not turned up again in the conversation, and prolonged it in an entirely new direction.

"On reflection, it seems to have struck Midwinter that the whole responsibility at Thorpe-Ambrose ought not to rest on Mr. Bashwood's shoulders. Without in the least distrusting him, Midwinter felt, nevertheless, that he ought to have somebody set over him, to apply to, in case of emergency. Armadale made no objection to this; he only asked, in his helpless way, who the person was to be?

"The answer was not an easy one to arrive at. Either of the two solicitors at Thorpe-Ambrose might have been employed—but Armadale was on bad terms with both of them. Any reconciliation with such a bitter enemy as the elder lawyer, Mr. Darch, was out of the question; and reinstating Mr. Pedgift in his former position, implied a tacit sanction on Armadale's part, of the lawyer's abominable conduct towards *me*, which was scarcely consistent with the respect and regard that he felt for a lady who was soon to be his friend's wife. After some further discussion, Midwinter hit on a new suggestion which appeared to meet the difficulty. He proposed that Armadale should write to a respectable solicitor at Norwich, stating his position in general terms, and requesting that gentleman to take charge of his affairs, and to act as Mr. Bashwood's adviser and superintendent when occasion required. Norwich being within an easy railway ride of Thorpe-Ambrose, Armadale saw no objection to the proposal, and promised to write to the Norwich lawyer. Fearing that he might make some mistake, if he wrote without assistance, Midwinter had drawn him out a draft of the necessary letter, and Armadale was now engaged in copying the draft, and also in writing to Mr. Bashwood to lodge the money immediately in Coutts's Bank.

"These details are so dry and uninteresting in themselves, that I hesitated at first about putting them down in my diary. But a little reflection has convinced me that they are too important to be passed over. Looked at from my point of view, they mean this—that Armadale's own act is now cutting him off from all communication with Thorpe-Ambrose, even by letter. *He is as good as dead, already, to everybody he leaves behind him.* The causes which have led to such a result as that, are causes which certainly claim the best place I can give them in these pages.

" *August 1st.*—Nothing to record, but that I have had a long quiet, happy day with Midwinter. He hired a carriage, and we drove to Richmond, and dined there. After to-day's experience, it is impossible to deceive myself any longer. Come what may of it, I love him.

" I have fallen into low spirits since he left me. A persuasion has taken possession of my mind, that the smooth and prosperous course of my affairs since I have been in London, is too smooth and prosperous to last. There is something oppressing me to-night, which is more than the oppression of the heavy London air.

" *August 2nd. Three o'clock.*—My presentiments, like other people's, have deceived me often enough—but I am almost afraid that my presentiment of last night was really prophetic, for once in a way.

" I went after breakfast to a milliner's in this neighbourhood to order a few cheap summer things, and thence to Midwinter's hotel to arrange with him for another day in the country. I drove to the milliner's and to the hotel, and part of the way back. Then, feeling disgusted with the horrid close smell of the cab (somebody had been smoking in it, I suppose), I got out to walk the rest of the way. Before I had been two minutes on my feet, I discovered that I was being followed by a strange man.

" This may mean nothing but that an idle fellow has been struck by my figure, and my appearance generally. My face could have made no impression on him—for it was hidden as usual by my veil. Whether he followed me (in a cab of course) from the milliner's, or from the hotel, I cannot say. Nor am I quite certain whether he did or did not track me to this door. I only know that I lost sight of him before I got back. There is no help for it but to wait till events enlighten me. If there is anything serious in what has happened, I shall soon discover it.

" *Five o'clock.*—It is serious. Ten minutes since, I was in my bed-room, which communicates with the sitting-room. I was just coming out, when I heard a strange voice on the landing outside—a woman's voice. The next instant the sitting-room door was suddenly opened; the woman's voice said, 'Are these the apartments you have got to let?'—and though the landlady, behind her, answered, 'No! higher up, ma'am,' the woman came on straight to my bed-room, as if she had not heard. I had just time to slam the door in her face before she saw me. The necessary explanations and apologies followed between the landlady and the stranger in the sitting-room—and then I was left alone again.

" I have no time to write more. It is plain that somebody has an interest in trying to identify me, and that, but for my own quickness, the strange woman would have accomplished this object by taking me by surprise. She and the man who followed me in the street are, I suspect, in league together; and there is probably somebody in the background whose interests they are serving. Is Mother Oldershaw attacking me in

the dark? or who else can it be? No matter who it is; my present situation is too critical to be trifled with. I must get away from this house to-night, and leave no trace behind me by which I can be followed to another place.

"*August 3rd.—Gary Street, Tottenham Court Road.*—I got away last night (after writing an excuse to Midwinter, in which 'my invalid mother' figured as the all-sufficient cause of my disappearance); and I have found refuge here. It has cost me some money; but my object is attained! Nobody can possibly have traced me from All Saints' Terrace to this address.

"After paying my landlady the necessary forfeit for leaving her without notice, I arranged with her son that he should take my boxes in a cab to the cloak-room at the nearest railway station, and send me the ticket in a letter, to wait my application for it at the post-office. While he went his way in one cab, I went mine in another, with a few things for the night in my little hand-bag. I drove straight to the milliner's shop—which I had observed, when I was there yesterday, had a back entrance into a mews, for the apprentices to go in and out by. I went in at once, leaving the cab waiting for me at the door. 'A man is following me,' I said; 'and I want to get rid of him. Here is my cab-fare; wait ten minutes before you give it to the driver, and let me out at once by the back way! In a moment I was out in the mews—in another, I was in the next street—in a third, I hailed a passing omnibus, and was a free woman again.

"Having now cut off all communication between me and my last lodgings, the next precaution (in case Midwinter or Armadale are watched) is to cut off all communication, for some days to come at least, between me and the hotel. I have written to Midwinter—making my supposititious mother once more the excuse—to say that I am tied to my nursing duties, and that we must communicate by writing only for the present. Doubtful as I still am of who my hidden enemy really is, I can do no more to defend myself than I have done now.

"*August 4th.*—The two friends at the hotel have both written to me. Midwinter expresses his regret at our separation, in the tenderest terms. Armadale writes an entreaty for help under very awkward circumstances. A letter from Major Milroy has been forwarded to him from the great house, and he encloses it in his letter to me.

"Having left the seaside, and placed his daughter safely at the school originally chosen for her (in the neighbourhood of Ely), the major appears to have returned to Thorpe-Ambrose at the close of last week; to have heard then, for the first time, the reports about Armadale and me; and to have written instantly to Armadale to tell him so.

"The letter is stern and short. Major Milroy dismisses the report as unworthy of credit, because it is impossible for him to believe in such an

act of 'cold-blooded treachery,' as the scandal would imply, if the scandal were true. He simply writes to warn Armadale that, if he is not more careful in his actions for the future, he must resign all pretensions to Miss Milroy's hand. 'I neither expect, nor wish for, an answer to this' (the letter ends), 'for I desire to receive no mere protestations in words. By your conduct, and by your conduct alone, I shall judge you as time goes on. Let me also add, that I positively forbid you to consider this letter as an excuse for violating the terms agreed on between us, by writing again to my daughter. You have no need to justify yourself in her eyes—for I fortunately removed her from Thorpe-Ambrose before this abominable report had time to reach her; and I shall take good care, for her sake, that she is not agitated and unsettled by hearing it where she is now.'

"Armadale's petition to me, under these circumstances, entreats (as I am the innocent cause of the new attack on his character), that I will write to the major to absolve him of all indiscretion in the matter, and to say that he could not, in common politeness, do otherwise than accompany me to London. I forgive the impudence of his request, in consideration of the news that he sends me. It is certainly another circumstance in my favour, that the scandal at Thorpe-Ambrose is not to be allowed to reach Miss Milroy's ears. With her temper (if she did hear it) she might do something desperate in the way of claiming her lover, and might compromise me seriously. As for my own course with Armadale, it is easy enough. I shall quiet him by promising to write to Major Milroy; and I shall take the liberty, in my own private interests, of not keeping my word.

"Nothing in the least suspicious has happened to-day. Whoever my enemies are, they have lost me, and between this and the time when I leave England they shall not find me again. I have been to the post-office, and have got the ticket for my luggage, enclosed to me in a letter from All Saints' Terrace as I directed. The luggage itself I shall still leave at the cloak-room, until I see the way before me more clearly than I see it now.

"*August 5th.*—Two letters again from the hotel. Midwinter writes to remind me, in the prettiest possible manner, that he will have lived long enough in the parish by to-morrow to be able to get our marriage licence, and that he proposes applying for it in the usual way at Doctors' Commons. Now, if I am ever to say it, is the time to say No. I can't say No. There is the plain truth—and there is an end of it!

"Armadale's letter is a letter of farewell. He thanks me for my kindness in consenting to write to the major, and bids me good-by till we meet again at Naples. He has learnt from his friend that there are private reasons which will oblige him to forbid himself the pleasure of being present at our marriage. Under these circumstances, there is nothing to keep him in London. He has made all his business arrangements; he goes to Somersetshire by to-night's train; and, after staying some time with Mr. Brock, he will sail for the Mediterranean from the Bristol Channel (in spite of Midwinter's objections) in his own yacht.

"The letter encloses a jeweller's box, with a ring in it—Armadale's present to me on my marriage. It is a ruby—but rather a small one, and set in the worst possible taste. He would have given Miss Milroy a ring worth ten times the money, if it had been *her* marriage present. There is no more hateful creature, in my opinion, than a miserly young man. I wonder whether his trumpery little yacht will drown him?

"I am so excited and fluttered, I hardly know what I am writing. Not that I shrink from what is coming—I only feel as if I was being hurried on faster than I quite like to go. At this rate, if nothing happens, Midwinter will have married me, by the end of the week. And then——!

"*August 6th.*—If anything could startle me now, I should feel startled by the news that has reached me to-day.

"On his return to the hotel this morning, after getting the Marriage Licence, Midwinter found a telegram waiting for him. It contained an urgent message from Armadale, announcing that Mr. Brock had had a relapse, and that all hope of his recovery was pronounced by the doctors to be at an end. By the dying man's own desire, Midwinter was summoned to take leave of him, and was entreated by Armadale not to lose a moment in starting for the rectory by the first train.

"The hurried letter which tells me this, tells me also that, by the time I receive it, Midwinter will be on his way to the west. He promises to write at greater length, after he has seen Mr. Brock, by to-night's post.

"This news has an interest for me, which Midwinter little suspects. There is but one human creature, besides myself, who knows the secret of his birth and his name—and that one, is the old man who now lies waiting for him at the point of death. What will they say to each other at the last moment? Will some chance word take them back to the time when I was in Mrs. Armadale's service at Madeira? Will they speak of Me?

"*August 7th.*—The promised letter has just reached me. No parting words have been exchanged between them—it was all over before Midwinter reached Somersetshire. Armadale met him at the rectory gate with the news that Mr. Brock was dead.

"I try to struggle against it, but, coming after the strange complication of circumstances that has been closing round me for weeks past, there is something in this latest event of all that shakes my nerves. But one last chance of detection stood in my way when I opened my diary yesterday. When I open it to-day, that chance is removed by Mr. Brock's death. It means something; I wish I knew what.

"The funeral is to be on Saturday morning. Midwinter will attend it as well as Armadale. But he proposes returning to London first; and he writes word that he will call to-night, in the hope of seeing me on his way from the station to the hotel. Even if there was any risk in it, I should see him, as things are now. But there is no risk if he comes here from the station, instead of coming from the hotel.



"*Five o'clock.*—I was not mistaken in believing that my nerves were all unstrung. Trifles that would not have cost me a second thought at other times, weigh heavily on my mind now.

"Two hours since, in despair of knowing how to get through the day, I bethought myself of the milliner who is making my summer dress. I had intended to go and try it on yesterday—but it slipped out of my memory, in the excitement of hearing about Mr. Brock. So I went this afternoon, eager to do anything that might help me to get rid of myself. I have returned, feeling more uneasy and more depressed than I felt when I went out—for I have come back, fearing that I may yet have reason to repent not having left my unfinished dress on the milliner's hands.

"Nothing happened to me, this time, in the street. It was only in the trying-on room that my suspicions were roused; and, there, it certainly did cross my mind that the attempt to discover me, which I defeated at All Saints' Terrace, was not given up yet, and that some of the shopwomen had been tampered with, if not the mistress herself.

"Can I give myself anything in the shape of a reason for this impression? Let me think a little.

"I certainly noticed two things which were out of the ordinary routine, under the circumstances. In the first place, there were twice as many women as were needed in the trying-on room. This looked suspicious—and yet, I might have accounted for it in more ways than one. Is it not the slack time now? and don't I know by experience that I am the sort of woman about whom other women are always spitefully curious? I thought again, in the second place, that one of the assistants persisted rather oddly in keeping me turned in a particular direction, with my face towards the glazed and curtained door that led into the work-room. But, after all, she gave a reason, when I asked for it. She said the light fell better on me that way—and, when I looked round, there was the window to prove her right. Still, these trifles produced such an effect on me, at the time, that I purposely found fault with the dress, so as to have an excuse for trying it on again, before I told them where I lived, and had it sent home. Pure fancy, I dare say. Pure fancy, perhaps, at the present moment. I don't care—I shall act on instinct (as they say), and give up the dress. In plainer words still, I won't go back.

"*Midnight.*—Midwinter came to see me as he promised. An hour has passed since we said good-night; and here I still sit, with my pen in my hand, thinking of him. No words of mine can describe what has passed between us. The end of it is all I can write in these pages—and the end of it is, that he has shaken my resolution. For the first time since I saw the easy way to Armadale's life at Thorpe-Ambrose, I feel as if the man whom I have doomed in my own thoughts, had a chance of escaping me.

"Is it my love for Midwinter that has altered me? Or is it *his* love for *me* that has taken possession, not only of all I wish to give him, but of

all I wish to keep from him as well? I feel as if I had lost myself—lost myself, I mean, in *him*—all through the evening. He was in great agitation about what had happened in Somersetshire—and he made me feel as disheartened and as wretched about it as he did. Though he never confessed it in words, I know that Mr. Brock's death has startled him as an ill-omen for our marriage—I know it, because I feel Mr. Brock's death as an ill-omen too. The superstition—*his* superstition—took so strong a hold on me, that when we grew calmer, and he spoke of the future—when he told me that he must either break his engagement with his new employers, or go abroad, as he is pledged to go, on Monday next—I actually shrank at the thought of our marriage following close on Mr. Brock's funeral; I actually said to him, in the impulse of the moment, 'Go, and begin your new life alone! go, and leave me here to wait for happier times.'

"He took me in his arms. He sighed, and kissed me with an angelic tenderness. He said—oh, so softly and so sadly!—'I have no life now, apart from *you*.' As those words passed his lips, the thought seemed to rise in my mind like an echo, 'Why not live out all the days that are left to me, happy and harmless in a love like this!' I can't explain it—I can't realize it. That was the thought in me at the time; and that is the thought in me still. I see my own hand while I write the words—and I ask myself whether it is really the hand of Lydia Gwilt!

"Armadale—

"No! I will never write, I will never think of Armadale again.

"Yes! Let me write once more—let me think once more of him, because it quiets me to know that he is going away, and that the sea will have parted us before I am married. His old home is home to him no longer, now that the loss of his mother has been followed by the loss of his best and earliest friend. When the funeral is over, he has decided to sail the same day for the foreign seas. We may, or we may not, meet at Naples. Shall I be an altered woman, if we do? I wonder! I wonder!

"*August 8th.*—A line from Midwinter. He has gone back to Somersetshire to be in readiness for the funeral to-morrow; and he will return here (after bidding Armadale good-by) to-morrow evening.

"The last forms and ceremonies preliminary to our marriage have been complied with. I am to be his wife, on Monday next. The hour must not be later than half-past ten—which will give us just time, when the service is over, to get from the church door to the railway, and to start on our journey to Naples the same day.

"To-day—Saturday—Sunday! I am not afraid of the time; the time will pass. I am not afraid of myself, if I can only keep all thoughts but one out of my mind. I love him! Day and night, till Monday comes, I will think of nothing but that. I love him!

"*Four o'clock.*—Other thoughts are forced into my mind in spite of

me. My suspicions of yesterday were no mere fancies; the milliner *has* been tampered with. My folly in going back to her house has led to my being traced here. I am absolutely certain that I never gave the woman my address—and yet my new gown was sent home to me at two o'clock to-day!

“A man brought it with the bill, and a civil message to say that, as I had not called at the appointed time to try it on again, the dress had been finished and sent to me. He caught me in the passage; I had no choice but to pay the bill, and dismiss him. Any other proceeding, as events have now turned out, would have been pure folly. The messenger (not the man who followed me in the street, but another spy sent to look at me beyond all doubt) would have declared he knew nothing about it, if I had spoken to him. The milliner would tell me to my face, if I went to her, that I had given her my address. The one useful thing to do now, is to set my wits to work in the interests of my own security, and to step out of the false position in which my own rashness has placed me—if I can.

“*Seven o'clock.*—My spirits have risen again. I believe I am in a fair way of extricating myself already.

“I have just come back from a long round in a cab. First, to the cloak-room of the Great Western, to get the luggage which I sent there from All Saints' Terrace. Next, to the cloak-room of the South Eastern, to leave my luggage (labelled in Midwinter's name), to wait for me till the starting of the tidal train on Monday. Next, to the General Post Office, to post a letter to Midwinter at the rectory, which he will receive to-morrow morning. Lastly, back again to this house—from which I shall move no more till Monday comes.

“My letter to Midwinter will, I have little doubt, lead to his seconding (quite innocently) the precautions that I am taking for my own safety. The shortness of the time at our disposal, on Monday, will oblige him to pay his bill at the hotel and to remove his luggage, before the marriage ceremony takes place. All I ask him to do beyond this, is to take the luggage himself to the South Eastern (so as to make any inquiries useless which may address themselves to the servants at the hotel)—and, that done, to meet me at the church door, instead of calling for me here. The rest concerns nobody but myself. When Sunday night or Monday morning comes, it will be hard indeed—freed as I am now from all encumbrances—if I can't give the people who are watching me the slip for the second time.

“It seems needless enough to have written to Midwinter to-day, when he is coming back to me to-morrow night. But it was impossible to ask, what I have been obliged to ask of him, without making my false family circumstances once more the excuse; and having this to do—I must own the truth—I wrote to him because, after what I suffered on the last occasion, I can never again deceive him to his face.

"August 9th.—Two o'clock.—I rose early this morning, more depressed in spirits than usual. The re-beginning of one's life, at the re-beginning of every day, has always been something weary and hopeless to me for years past. I dreamt too all through the night—not of Midwinter and of my married life, as I had hoped to dream—but of the wretched conspiracy to discover me, by which I have been driven from one place to another, like a hunted animal. Nothing in the shape of a new revelation enlightened me in my sleep. All I could guess, dreaming, was what I had guessed waking, that Mother Oldershaw is the enemy who is attacking me in the dark. Except old Bashwood (whom it would be ridiculous to think of in such a serious matter as this), who else but Mother Oldershaw can have an object to serve by interfering with my proceedings at the present time?

"My restless night has, however, produced one satisfactory result. It has led to my winning the good graces of the servant here, and securing all the assistance she can give me when the time comes for making my escape.

"The girl noticed this morning that I looked pale and anxious. I took her into my confidence, to the extent of telling her that I was privately engaged to be married, and that I had enemies who were trying to part me from my sweetheart. This instantly roused her sympathy—and a present of a ten-shilling piece for her kind services to me did the rest. In the intervals of her house-work she has been with me nearly the whole morning; and I have found out, among other things, that *her* sweetheart is a private soldier in the Guards, and that she expects to see him to-morrow. I have got money enough left, little as it is, to turn the head of any Private in the British army—and, if the person appointed to watch me to-morrow is a man, I think it just possible that he may find his attention disagreeably diverted from Miss Gwilt in the course of the evening.

"When Midwinter came here last from the railway, he came at half-past eight. How am I to get through the weary, weary hours between this and the evening? I think I shall darken my bedroom, and drink the blessing of oblivion from my bottle of Drops.

"*Eleven o'clock.*—We have parted for the last time before the day comes that makes us man and wife.

"He has left me, as he left me before, with an absorbing subject of interest to think of in his absence. I noticed a change in him the moment he entered the room. When he told me of the funeral, and of his parting with Armadale on board the yacht, though he spoke with feelings deeply moved, he spoke with a mastery over himself which is new to me in my experience of him. It was the same when our talk turned next on our own hopes and prospects. He was plainly disappointed when he found that my family embarrassments would prevent our meeting to-morrow, and plainly uneasy at the prospect of leaving me to find my way by myself

on Monday to the church. But there was a certain hopefulness and composure of manner underlying it all, which produced so strong an impression on me that I was obliged to notice it. 'You know what odd fancies take possession of me sometimes,' I said. 'Shall I tell you the fancy that has taken possession of me now? I can't help thinking that something has happened since we last saw each other, which you have not told me yet.'

" 'Something *has* happened,' he answered. 'And it is something which you ought to know.'

" With those words he took out his pocket-book, and produced two written papers from it. One he looked at and put back. The other he placed on the table before me. Keeping his hand on it for a moment, he spoke again.

" 'Before I tell you what this is, and how it came into my possession,' he said, 'I must own something that I have concealed from you. It is no more serious confession than the confession of my own weakness.'

" He then acknowledged to me, that the renewal of his friendship with Armadale had been clouded, through the whole period of their intercourse in London, by his own superstitious misgivings. On every occasion when they were alone together, the terrible words of his father's death-bed letter, and the terrible confirmation of them in the warnings of the Dream, were present to his mind. Day after day, the conviction that fatal consequences to Armadale would come of the renewal of their friendship, and of my share in accomplishing it, had grown stronger and stronger in its influence over him. He had obeyed the summons which called him to the rector's bedside, with the firm intention of confiding his previsions of coming trouble to Mr. Brock; and he had been doubly confirmed in his superstition, when he found that Death had entered the house before him, and had parted them, in this world, for ever. He had travelled back to be present at the funeral, with a secret sense of relief at the prospect of being parted from Armadale, and with a secret resolution to make the after-meeting agreed on between us three at Naples, a meeting that should never take place. With that purpose in his heart, he had gone up alone to the room prepared for him, on his arrival at the rectory, and had opened a letter which he found waiting for him on the table. The letter had only that day been discovered—dropped and lost—under the bed on which Mr. Brock had died. It was in the rector's handwriting throughout; and the person to whom it was addressed, was Midwinter himself.

" Having told me this, nearly in the words in which I have written it, he lifted his hand from the written paper that lay on the table between us.

" 'Read it,' he said; 'and you will not need to be told that my mind is at peace again, and that I took Allan's hand at parting, with a heart that was worthier of Allan's love.'

" I read the letter. There was no superstition to be conquered in *my* mind; there were no old feelings of gratitude towards Armadale, to be

roused in *my* heart—and yet, the effect which the letter had had on Midwinter, was, I firmly believe, more than matched by the effect that the letter now produced on Me.

“It was vain to ask him to leave it, and to let me read it again (as I wished) when I was left by myself. He is determined not to let it out of his own possession; he is determined to keep it side by side with that other paper which I had seen him take out of his pocket-book, and which contains the written narrative of Armadale’s Dream. All I could do was to ask his leave to copy it; and this he granted readily. I wrote the copy in his presence; and I now place it here in my diary, to mark a day which is one of the memorable days of my life.

Boscombe Rectory, August 2nd.

“MY DEAR MIDWINTER,—For the first time since the beginning of my illness, I found strength enough yesterday to look over my letters. One among them is a letter from Allan, which has been lying unopened on my table for ten days past. He writes to me in great distress, to say that there has been dissension between you, and that you have left him. If you still remember what passed between us, when you first opened your heart to me in the Isle of Man, you will be at no loss to understand how I have thought over this miserable news, through the night that has now passed, and you will not be surprised to hear that I have roused myself this morning to make the effort of writing to you. Although I am far from despairing of myself, I dare not, at my age, trust too confidently to my prospects of recovery. While the time is still my own, I must employ it for Allan’s sake and for yours.

“I want no explanation of the circumstances which have parted you from your friend. If my estimate of your character is not founded on an entire delusion, the one influence which can have led to your estrangement from Allan, is the influence of that evil spirit of Superstition, which I have once already cast out of your heart—which I will once again conquer, please God, if I have strength enough to make my pen speak my mind to you in this letter.

“It is no part of my design to combat the belief which I know you to hold, that mortal creatures may be the objects of supernatural intervention in their pilgrimage through this world. Speaking as a reasonable man, I own that I cannot prove you to be wrong. Speaking as a believer in the Bible, I am bound to go farther, and to admit that you possess a higher than any human warrant for the faith that is in you. The one object which I have it at heart to attain, is to induce you to free yourself from the paralysing fatalism of the heathen and the savage, and to look at the mysteries that perplex, and the portents that daunt you, from the Christian’s point of view. If I can succeed in this, I shall clear your mind of the ghastly doubts that now oppress it, and I shall re-unite you to your friend, never to be parted from him again.

“I have no means of seeing and questioning you. I can only send



this letter to Allan to be forwarded, if he knows, or can discover, your present address. Placed in this position towards you, I am bound to assume all that *can* be assumed in your favour. I will take it for granted that something has happened to you or to Allan, which to your mind has not only confirmed the fatalist conviction in which your father died, but has added a new and terrible meaning to the warning which he sent you in his death-bed letter.

"On this common ground I meet you. On this common ground I appeal to your higher nature and your better sense.

"Preserve your present conviction that the events which have happened (be they what they may) are not to be reconciled with ordinary mortal coincidences and ordinary mortal laws; and view your own position by the best and clearest light that your superstition can throw on it. What are you? You are a helpless instrument in the hands of Fate. You are doomed, beyond all human capacity of resistance, to bring misery and destruction blindfold on a man to whom you have harmlessly and gratefully united yourself in the bonds of a brother's love. All that is morally firmest in your will and morally purest in your aspirations, avails nothing against the hereditary impulsion of you towards evil, caused by a crime which your father committed before you were born. In what does that belief end? It ends in the darkness in which you are now lost; in the self-contradictions in which you are now bewildered—in the stubborn despair by which a man profanes his own soul, and lowers himself to the level of the brutes that perish.

"Look up, my poor suffering brother—look up, my hardly-trying, my well-loved friend, higher than this! Meet the doubts that now assail you from the blessed vantage-ground of Christian courage and Christian hope; and your heart will turn again to Allan, and your mind will be at peace. Happen what may, God is all-merciful, God is all-wise: natural or supernatural, it happens through Him. The mystery of Evil that perplexes our feeble minds, the sorrow and the suffering that torture us in this little life, leave the one great truth unshaken that the destiny of man is in the hands of his Creator, and that God's blessed Son died to make us worthier of it. Nothing that is done in unquestioning submission to the wisdom of the Almighty, is done wrong. No evil exists, out of which, in obedience to His laws, Good may not come. Be true to what Christ tells you is true. Encourage in yourself, be the circumstances what they may, all that is loving, all that is grateful, all that is patient, all that is forgiving, towards your fellow-men. And humbly and trustfully leave the rest to the God who made you, and to the Saviour who loved you better than his own life.

"This is the faith in which I have lived, by the Divine help and mercy, from my youth upward. I ask you earnestly, I ask you confidently, to make it your faith too. It is the mainspring of all the good I have ever done, of all the happiness I have ever known; it lightens my darkness, it sustains my hope; it comforts and quiets me, lying here, to

live or die, I know not which. Let it sustain, comfort, and enlighten you. It will help you in your sorest need, as it has helped me in mine. It will show you another purpose in the events which brought you and Allan together than the purpose which your guilty father foresaw. Strange things, I do not deny it, have happened to you already. Stranger things still may happen before long, which I may not live to see. Remember, if that time comes, that I died firmly disbelieving in your influence over Allan being other than an influence for good. The great sacrifice of the Atonement—I say it reverently—has its mortal reflections, even in this world. If danger ever threatens Allan, you, whose father took his father's life—You, and no other, may be the man whom the providence of God has appointed to save him.

"Come to me, if I live. Go back to the friend who loves you, whether I live or die.—Yours affectionately to the last,

"DECIMUS BROCK."

"'You, and no other, may be the man whom the providence of God has appointed to save him!'

"Those are the words which have shaken me to the soul. Those are the words which make me feel as if the dead man had left his grave, and had put his hand on the place in my heart where my terrible secret lies hidden from every living creature but myself. One part of the letter has come true already. The danger that it foresees, threatens Armadale at this moment—and threatens him from Me!

"If the favouring circumstances which have driven me thus far, drive me on to the end; and if that old man's last earthly conviction is prophetic of the truth, Armadale will escape me, do what I may. And Midwinter will be the victim who is sacrificed to save his life.

"It is horrible! it is impossible! it shall never be! At the thinking of it only, my hand trembles, and my heart sinks. I bless the trembling that unnerves me! I bless the sinking that turns me faint! I bless those words in the letter which have revived the relenting thoughts that first came to me two days since! Is it hard, now that events are taking me, smoothly and safely, nearer and nearer to the End—is it hard to conquer the temptation to go on? No! If there is only a chance of harm coming to Midwinter, the dread of that chance is enough to decide me—enough to strengthen me to conquer the temptation, for his sake. I have never loved him yet, never, never, never as I love him now!

"*Sunday, August 10th.*—The eve of my wedding-day! I close and lock this book, never to write in it, never to open it again.

"I have won the great victory; I have trampled my own wickedness under foot. I am innocent; I am happy again. My love! my angel! when to-morrow gives me to you, I will not have a thought in my heart which is not *your* thought, as well as mine!"

## The Jews' Weeping-Place, Jerusalem.

(November, 1859.)

I.

SHARP clash the hoofs on marbles worn,  
 In Zion's ruin-paven street :  
 Spare our tired horses' floundering feet ;  
 Light down, and tread the ways forlorn,  
 Where all seems canker'd with disease :  
 If there be houses tainted still  
 With scurf and scale of human ill,  
 They needs must crumble down like these.  
 And leprous men beside the way,  
 On whom the ancient curse is laid,  
 Crouch featureless in cruel day,  
 And dumb and darkling sign for aid.  
 Cast down your alms, and hasten on,  
 Foot-deep in Salem's festering dust,  
 Past close-barr'd hovels, which encrust  
 Those walls, once marble, rose and white,  
 Which Herod built, or Solomon.  
 Go down with yonder abject few,  
 In caftan green or dim white veil,  
 Who hurry by to raise anew  
 Their feeble voice of endless wail,  
 Before Moriah's stones of might.  
 Scant beards are torn, old eyelids stream  
 With many a sad, unhelpful tear ;  
 Man's weeping and earth's ruin seem  
 To find their common centre here.  
 And scarcely more hath Time's decay  
 Channell'd the storm-worn course on high,  
 Than kissing lips have worn away  
 The giant under-masonry.

## II.

The Wise King stood on Zion ridge,  
 With purpled priests and chiefs in mail;  
 Where Temple-wards his eastern bridge  
 Aërial, massive, spanned the vale.  
 Day and night his awful eyes  
 Gazed into all mysteries;  
 Night and day his voice was heard  
 Touching man, and beast, and bird,  
 And all growing things that be,  
 Towering great, or subtly small;  
 From the red-arm'd cedar-tree  
 To the hyssop on the wall.  
 Did it vex his heart to know,  
 How that mean sad herb would grow  
 From each vast and polished square  
 His high word had order'd there?  
 It springs austere and pale and faint;  
 No dancing showers, like fairies' feet,  
 Bring feather'd fern, and wallflower sweet,  
 And ivy-nets and mosses quaint,  
 That cheer decay in Northern lands;  
 Here spiny weeds grow harsh and grey,  
 Even as they grew, that paschal day,  
 When they were pluck'd by mocking hands,  
 To crown the Victim led away . . . .  
 There mourn the sons whose sires bade slay.

## III.

Well, we are modern ruins too,  
 With back-turn'd looks to woeful when;  
 Yet can be keen as hounds at view,  
 For toil, or sport, or strife of men.  
 Grief cannot crush while strength is left.  
 O city of all sorrows, we  
 Forget our transient pains in thee!  
 Seeing much abides, though more be left.  
 The fountains of our eyes are dry  
 With change and labour, all the years;  
 Yet this we care not to deny,  
 That, be they shed by girls or boys,  
 For love, or pain, or broken toys,  
 Even idle tears are always tears.

Why should our wayward souls refuse  
 To sever scorn from sympathy?  
 One cannot weep with wailing Jews:  
 They howl, as toothless wolves may cry;  
 They chatter like the autumn crane;  
 Each stands, himself a prophecy,  
 And means his psalm, its hope unknown,  
 While the salt drops flow on in vain;  
 Ah me, poor slaves whom none will buy,  
 Sad thralls whom none will own!  
 Tears we have none; with awe and sighs  
 We feel that these mad mourners' woe  
 Strikes hard on one deep sounding chord:  
 That the bright Temple lieth low  
 Where, in the ancient centuries,  
 Men saw the great Light of the Lord.  
 Where eyes of flesh in latter days  
 Beheld the Saviour come and go,—  
 A wide world's Light of softer rays.

\* \* \* \* \*

What hope? the helpless thought intrudes:  
 —Pass the near postern: mount and ride  
 Where Hinnom's vultures wheel and feast.  
 Stand, and look north and south, and east  
 Down silent Kedron's populous side;  
 There rest—for furlongs, thick and wide,  
 In shallow soil, or rock-hewn cell—  
 The multitudes, the multitudes.  
 And there is peace for Israel.

R. St. J. T.



## Catherine de Bourbon.

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THANKS to the multitude of French memoirs, and to our English love of "gossip, undistilled biography," we are very familiar with the lives, as well as the scandals, of many mediæval and modern Frenchwomen. We know the stories about Agnes Sorel and the good she did, and the virtuous indignation of the monks of Jumièges; the passion of Henry the Fourth for Gabrielle d'Estrées, and others; the daily transacting of public business by Louis the Fourteenth with "*la vieille sée*," as St. Simon calls her, by his side; as well as the more creditable lives of Madame de Longueville and Madame de Sablé, and the political and social careers of Madame Roland and Madame Récamière. Among such women Catherine de Bourbon, the fondly-loved sister of Henry the Great, has no place; her name will not be found mixed with any scandal, though she lived at the court of Henry of Navarre, "*louvoyant entre les amours de son frère, et les prétentions et les galanteries des jeunes seigneurs de son parti*."

Madame d'Armaillé has lately made her the subject of a charming "*étude historique*," although, in truth, her name scarcely figures in history, for she was a remarkable example of how great and how good may be the influence of a woman who is content to perform the duties of that station in which God has placed her. She neither sought activity nor notoriety. Brought up a Calvinist, she encouraged if she did not inspire in Henry the principles that bore fruit in the edict of Nantes; and before she died, she gained a victory over the Pope himself by obtaining his recognition of her marriage, while she was still a heretic.

Catherine de Bourbon was one of the two surviving children of Antoine de Bourbon and the celebrated Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre. Two elder children had died, one because a chilly nurse kept it too hot, and another because a careless one played at ball with it; and when another son arrived, Jeanne's father resolved to rear him in his own way, and accordingly, "*si tost qu'il fût né, et lui frottoit les lèvres d'une gousse d'ail, et lui faisoit succer une goutte de vin*." Catherine was born the year after Elizabeth became Queen of England; and it was perhaps fortunate for these children and for France, that they were soon left in the care of a mother far more capable of fulfilling the duties of education than their other parent. Though Antoine de Bourbon was said to be "*d'une belle et rare vertu*," in matters of religion he had earned for himself the title of "*l'eschangeur*," and changes of religion in those times were changes of politics and principles. Four years after his death his widow formally and finally left the Roman Catholic Church, and she soon showed herself an uncompromising Calvinist, "*d'une bienveillance perturbatrice* "

for the salvation of the people of Béarn, whom she forbade to celebrate the mass, while she proceeded to confiscate ecclesiastical property, and to destroy sacred images and altars.

It was only to be expected that she would thus bring on herself the enmity of her Catholic relatives and neighbours; and the first danger that threatened little Catherine came from a plot, organized between the Duke of Guise and Philip the Second of Spain, for seizing Jeanne, putting her into the hands of the Inquisition, imprisoning her children, and dividing Navarre betwixt France and Spain. A strange accident defeated their plans. A messenger bearing despatches from Guise to Philip fell ill on the road, and the Good Samaritan who came to his relief was a servant of the Queen of Spain, who was dispensing the charities of his mistress. He removed him to his own lodging, where the sick man, partly in self-glorification, and partly to repay kindness with confidence, mentioned his employers, and showed the letters he was carrying. He was brought to the presence of the Queen of Spain, to whom he told his tale, and she, to save her cousin from so terrible a fate, warned the French ambassador, and wrote to the King and Queen-Mother of France. The ambassador, knowing how little likely Catherine de Medicis would be to disturb her own relations with Spain for the sake of the liberty of a Protestant Queen of Navarre, contrived to send word secretly to Jeanne of her danger; and the plot, once discovered, fell to the ground.

Jeanne was now occupied with the education of her daughter, and education it was in the broadest sense of the word. When she made out her scheme for this purpose, she began, as a few years later she began and ended her will, by urging on all to whom she could appeal, the choosing suitable friends and attendants for her child—"des femmes dont la vie entière est un exemple"—while she placed the control of her intellectual culture in the hands of the celebrated scholar, Theodore Beza. Catherine was to learn Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, as princesses in our day learn Latin and French and German. She had teachers for history and poetry, which probably involved the learning French, as her mother-tongue was the Béarnais, which her brother Henry talked even when first taken as a boy to see the King of France. Then she was to be duly taught Calvinism, though she was allowed to dance the "*voltas and corraamentos*" of Italy, and "*les pavaues d'Espagne*;" and her mother wound up with the hope that she would be "*soumise aux femmes vertueuses qui vont diriger ses pas au milieu de tant d'écueils.*" Shoals and quicksands were not likely to be wanting, and among other cares for Catherine's happiness, her mother spent time and thought in building and decorating Castle Beziat, near Pau, as a retreat for her from the gaieties or pettiness of her court.

The year 1572, Catherine's thirteenth year, was a sadly eventful one to her. In February she left Pau with her mother for Paris, and for the first time found herself surrounded by the splendour of royalty. Quaint must have been her own appearance. She was, if not beautiful, very



attractive, though delicate-looking and slightly lame, and she wore a dress "coupée à la mode Huguenot," which in the midst of the magnificence of the attendants of Catherine de Medicis must have looked as strange as that of a lady who should appear at court now-a-days with neither crinoline nor false hair. These brilliant scenes had not lost their novelty when she was left by her mother's death to contemplate them alone. This event occurred in June. On the eighteenth of August was celebrated the unwilling marriage of her brother, now King of Navarre, with Margaret of Valois; on the twenty-third of that same month began the massacre of St. Bartholomew, when the heartless Catherine de Medicis let the young queen take leave of her, and go to possible death, saying to one who remonstrated, "S'il plait à Dieu, elle n'aura point de mal." During that night a company of archers fetched Henry of Navarre from his bed, and brought him and the Prince de Condé to the presence of the King of France. "Il leur montra un monceau de corps morts, et avec d'horribles menaces, sans vouloir écouter leur raisons, il leur dit, 'La mort ou la messe.' Ils choisirent plutôt le dernier que le premier: ils abjurèrent le Calvinisme." Whether Henry then abjured for his sister, too, is not clearly told, but she was almost immediately after formally absolved from her heresy by the Cardinal de Bourbon, her uncle. Child as she was, she was probably stupefied by the hideous scenes around her. Macrin, her tutor, was murdered, as well as Teligny, who had come with her and her mother from Pau, and her friends, the wives of Teligny and Coligny, had only escaped with difficulty into exile. For the three following years Catherine lived in what was to all intents and purposes imprisonment: so close was the surveillance over her, and indeed over Henry too, for they were not allowed to meet except in the presence of others. But, in 1575, when Charles the Ninth died, she must have begun to discover her own importance, for his successor, directly after ascending the throne, offered to marry her. The queen-mother, however, did her best to frustrate his intentions, for she represented her as ill-made and dwarfish, while she took care Henry the Third should not see her, and kept her by every means in her power in the background. This retirement was evidently accepted by Catherine with satisfaction: it relieved her from the sight of dissipation and intrigue, which were as offensive to her principles as foreign to her nature; but her brother plunged into the midst of the pleasures of the court, as well from enjoyment of them as from feeling like others have done before and since, that the best security lay in floating along the surface-stream, leaving the world in ignorance of his talents and his principles, if not in doubt whether he had any.

In February, 1576, Henry threw off the mask and escaped, and was soon in a position to demand the release of his sister; and Catherine, attended by Sully, and Madame de Signonville, the friend her mother had especially bequeathed to her, joined him at Nérac, in Guienne. She was sixteen and he was twenty-two, and their friends and followers were not much older, but their court though gay was correct. Sully danced, and

Catherine taught him new steps in private to be performed a week after before the king ; Turenne (father of the Marshal) paid her intellectual homage, and says, "Madame et moy parlions souvent ensemble ; elle me disait familièrement ses conceptions, et moy les miennes." He was as brilliant as Mornay was serious and solid, but Mornay was a patriarch amongst them at seven-and-twenty. He had been doomed by his family to an ecclesiastical life, but had embraced the doctrines and principles of the Calvinists ; and while he set them all an example by his truly religious life, he diligently fanned the Protestant tendencies of the princess. But this state of things was interrupted by a daring step of Catherine de Medicis, who, feeling the importance of attaching Henry to her party, first proposed a marriage between Catherine and the presumptive heir to the French throne, and when that was refused, declared her intention of paying a visit to Nérac herself, carrying with her attendants as little likely to assist in her ostensible object of reconciling Henry to his queen as was the volatile Margaret herself.

The result of the arrival of the queen was a great change in the exterior of the life of the court. Margaret and Catherine seem to have agreed to differ on Sundays and holidays, Margaret hearing mass at a picturesque chapel in the depths of a wood, and Catherine "sitting under" a Calvinist divine in the town ; and the rest of their time they joined in all the fantastic gaiety then in vogue—balls, promenades, on horseback, or in litters of cloth of gold. Margaret seemed to find it quite pleasant to be good, for she wrote long after : "Nous avions conversations et plaisirs honnestes, et ma cour de Nérac en 1579 était si belle et si plaisante que nous n'enviions pas celle de France, y ayant Madame la Princesse de Navarre, ma sœur." The little court, however, was soon dispersed, Henry to "la guerre des amoureux," Margaret back to the Louvre, and Catherine to Pau, where she took on herself, at twenty, the duties of governor and lieutenant-general of Béarn. She had passed through an ordeal since she had left it last, and gained many an experience ; perhaps, as was said of her brother—

Souvent l'infortune aux rois est nécessaire,

—and the early loss of her mother and her consequent sojourn at the court of Catherine de Medicis had been useful in strengthening her character, giving her courage, and fixing in her mind the religious principles she had inherited. She had conformed for a time to the Catholic Church, and later, had openly left it, and now looked forward to realizing her mother's wish to protestantize Béarn. It was at this moment Philip the Second made proposals to Henry for her hand, offering, if accepted, to obtain from the Pope a divorce for him from Margaret of Valois—a somewhat strange article in a marriage contract ; but Catherine refused him, avowedly on religious grounds. Two years later another suitor appeared in the person of the Duke of Savoy ; the Duke of Lorraine offered her his hand ; the Duke of Wirtemberg was proposed ; and Elizabeth of England expressed a hope she would look favourably on

James Stuart of Scotland. But for one reason or another, Henry or Catherine rejected all these proposals.

In 1584, Margaret of Valois joined the League, and went openly to war with Henry, who she knew could with difficulty support a contest against her and the Guises. Catherine, with the help of her friend and former tutor, Theodore Beza, pawned her jewels to supply him with the means of carrying on the war, which lasted above two years; her ladies followed her example. And when she appealed to the municipality of Pau for fifteen thousand crowns, and they refused it, the townspeople subscribed for her sixteen thousand. The struggle was ended by Henry's victory at Courtrai in 1587, and he hastened in triumph to Béarn, carrying with him the twenty-two flags he had taken in the battle, and accompanied by his cousin the Count de Soissons, who was to exercise for many years after so unhappy an influence over Catherine's life.

The character of the Count de Soissons is one not worth attempting to analyze: he can hardly be said to have had either character or principles, or even to have been actuated by anything more than the impulses of the hour, and to have followed whichever impulse was most attractive at the moment,—“all things by turns, and nothing long.” He was a dashing warrior, fighting, it mattered little to him if it were for Henry of France or Henry of Navarre; a Protestant (though probably, as an honest Italian priest said of his Indian converts, “con molte cose del diavolo”), he received Catherine de Medicis as his guest. The orgies of Nogent and Blandy excited curiosity as much as they outraged decency; his gallantries at court, and his exploits at war, were on every one's lips. And this was the suitor Henry approved for his sister. They had been playfellows in childhood and companions in youth, and now, with her brother's wish and consent, Catherine promised him her hand. Whether the Count de Soissons was as sincere in his protestations of attachment as Catherine was in the love she gave him, may fairly be doubted. It is clear that Henry soon regretted what he had done, and quite clear that De Soissons gave him ample cause to do so. Even before he went back to his allegiance to the King of France, Henry announced this defection to his sister in a letter he sent by a messenger who carried a communication from James of Scotland; but Catherine received the messenger coolly, talked about the rigours of the Scotch climate, and hoped and trusted in her lover, with whom she corresponded secretly by means of one of her ladies.

When, in 1589, Henry became, “*et par droit de conquête et par droit de naissance*,” King of France, he constituted Catherine regent of Navarre as well as of Béarn; and she devoted herself to the internal administration of the kingdom, corresponding daily with her ministers on points of detail, and often retired to that “Château Chéri” her mother so long before provided for her. Her life was peaceful,—employed on the duties immediately surrounding her; but she kept a watchful eye on what was passing beyond; and while Henry's “white plume shone” on the field of Ivry, she took an

opportunity of making an attack on Spain to assist Antonio Perez, which was a useful diversion in her brother's favour. Suddenly her own tranquillity was interrupted in a way she little expected. She had kept up a correspondence with the Count de Soissons with the assistance of Madame de Grammont and Madame de Paugeas, who were aware how little it could be agreeable to her brother, and she trusted them fully : for whatever knowledge of life she had gained during her residence at the Louvre, she had not learnt to suspect. Both these ladies played her false, to gratify passions and carry on intrigues of their own.

The count appeared at Pau, having left the army on a false excuse, and imploring her to believe in this proof of his devotion and consent to an immediate marriage, succeeded so far as to obtain from her a written promise, witnessed by Madame de Grammont. Though he did not know of the promise till long after, Henry was furious with the count for going to Pau, and with his sister for receiving him. De Soissons, too, was no longer a popular hero, and the little public of Béarn was excited against him, and the princess learnt at last how many were the foes she had in her own household. Thousands of stories were circulated about the interview, some, characteristic of the age, saying that the count had used the infernal arts of the Medicis to bewitch the princess ; but Catherine had the courage and forbearance not to descend to the " noble art of self-justification," except in so far as to write a touching and dignified letter of remonstrance to her brother when he had sent M. de Paugeas to arrest the count, and M. de Ravignan to inform her she was a prisoner in her own castle. It is said that Henry shed tears as he read the letters : tears, we may hope, partly of self-reproach that he had allowed intrigues to surround and compromise his sister, by giving ear to the cruel tale-bearing of Madame de Paugeas. He had already reproved Madame de Grammont, writing to her, "*Je n'eusse pas pensé cela de vous, à qui je ne diray que ce mot : que toutes personnes qui voudront brouiller ma sœur avec moy, je ne leur pardonneray jamais.*" But if Catherine was able to deprecate his wrath towards herself, the Count de Soissons was not, and was, apparently, at no pains to do so. As soon as he was at liberty, he audaciously presented himself before Henry, and took the first opportunity of kicking the Baron de Paugeas downstairs in the king's house. We cannot wonder at Henry's seeking another match for his sister, but it is difficult to excuse the course he took and obliged Sully to take, except by supposing he was incapable of comprehending her constancy, or that he really was swayed alternately by his love for her and the necessity he felt for breaking off the marriage : when he was with her, he coaxed and threatened ; when she was absent, he sent Sully to deceive her into submission. The count meanwhile seemed resolved to show himself thoroughly unworthy of her, and in 1595, he deliberately deserted Henry, and carried away his troop of men on the eve of the battle of Fontaine-française. In relating the events of the battle to Catherine, Henry merely alluded to this treachery by saying,

"Ceux qui ne s'y sont pas trouvés y doivent avoir bien du regret." This long, strange love-story had been drawn out over eight years, and it was clear it would only be concluded by Catherine's marriage with another of her many suitors, and so it was ended soon after this; but we have brought the history of her life to this date in order that by showing what was her conduct to her brother as King of France, and to her people, as she considered the whole Calvinist body, during those same years, it may be seen how self-sacrificing she was, and how unflinching in the performance of her duty to both.

There can be no question that she was sure of Henry's sympathy in all her endeavours to obtain concessions for the Calvinists, for whatever creed Henry professed, he was always in principles Protestant, and in practice tolerant. Probably he would not have been a Catholic had there been for him any alternative but to be a Calvinist; but in the latter half of the sixteenth century there were no alternatives, as there seemed to be in the early part of it, when men hoped to secure reform within the church by protesting. By the time Catherine had begun to "reason on the rules of her duty," she could only "begin her care to observe them" by adhering to the Geneva church, which was the rival church in France; and great credit is due to Catherine that, when she did so, she avoided making herself the head of a rival party in the country. When Catholic France was triumphing in Henry's recantation, she openly received the sacrament and gathered round her a crowd of leading Protestants to what we should now call "prayer-meetings" in the Louvre. The Cardinal de Gondi (he who said that he would not *faire le dévot* because he did not feel sure he could keep it up,) remonstrated with Henry on his permitting such practices; Catherine was called from the pulpit, the French Jezebel; the people were set to complain that she gave food to the starving on fast days; and she could not cross the galleries of the Louvre without seeing insulting pasquinades affixed to the walls. She bore all this in silence, for she was quietly labouring to bring about a reconciliation between the churches, and for two years she toiled to procure for the Calvinists a recognition of their rights as French subjects, and Henry began to feel that some such concessions only could save him from a new religious war. In 1598, he promulgated, at Nantes, the celebrated edict which secured to France the enlightened and industrious population that a century later its revocation scattered over England, Holland, and Westphalia.

And now Catherine would have returned to end her life in peace at Béarn, to which she clung as her home. "Faites mes recommandations à mon cabinet et à mon allée," she had written not long before to the viceroy at Pau, but Henry ordered otherwise; she was to be married, and to the Catholic Duke de Bar, son of the Duke of Lorraine. "La sœur du roi de France était soumise, mais la fille Calviniste de Jeanne d'Albret demeura indépendante," and so independent, that when she was induced to sign the marriage-contract, Henry had to declare, as he put the pen in her hand, that he used no constraint, "ni audit mariage ni à être

Catholique." She said, however, that she would receive instructions in the orthodox faith, and accordingly, being ill, she lay in bed and listened to two divines in turn till she was tired. Catholic and Calvinist clergy opposed the marriage without effect.

At five o'clock on a January morning, in 1599, Henry, having sent for his natural brother the Archbishop of Rouen, and summoned the Duke de Bar and his father, fetched Catherine from her apartments to the hall where these guests were assembled, and addressing the archbishop said, "Mon frère, je désire que vous fassiez tout actuellement ledit mariage de ma sœur et M. le Duc de Bar." The prelate murmured something about the canons. "Ma présence est plus que toutes les solennités ordinaires, et mon cabinet, rempli de tant de personnes de qualité, est un lieu sacré et assez public pour cela," was Henry's rejoinder. "Après quoy le pauvre archevesque n'eut pas la force de resister," and the ceremony was performed.

The first year of this marriage, we can see from Catherine's letters, was very happy; but her husband, Catholic as he was, was soon made to feel keenly his false position, for it was in no sense even a legal marriage. In the first year of the seventeenth century there was a solemn jubilee at Rome, and he presented himself there to obtain pontifical absolution, and if possible the dispensation needful to allow a marriage within the prohibited degrees. Clement the Eighth was lenient, said at first he would go himself and try and convert Catherine, but deputed some very learned and very eloquent theologians to undertake the task, advising the duke at the same time to remove from his wife any very Protestant attendants; but Anne de Rohan was present throughout these ineffectual conferences, and she was the staunchest of Calvinists. Henry became irritated at Catherine's resisting these arguments. "Sire," said she, "ils veulent que je croye que notre mère est damnée." Henry turned aside to the duke and said with tears in his eyes, "C'en est assez, mon frère; je renonce à la dompter, c'est à vous d'y essayer." But of her husband's efforts Catherine had already said, "Il me dit sa peine avec tant d'amoureuses paroles, qu'à toute heure j'ai les yeux pleins de larmes, mais pourtant bien résolue de vivre et mourir en la crainte de Dieu." She became very ill in 1603: never robust, many long-drawn-out anxieties had worn away her constitution, and she suffered from protracted headaches, sometimes lasting fourteen months at a time. In December of that year, nine Cardinals and four councillors, appointed by the Pope to consider the question of the marriage, agreed to a form of dispensation which his Holiness, worked on by Henry and the Duke of Lorraine, appealed to entreatingly by Catherine herself, at last accorded to her. "Croyez, mon roy," she said to Henry, "que je suis la plus heureuse et la plus contente femme qui vive;" but it was too late for ease of mind to restore her to health, and she was rapidly fading away, sometimes catching at the delusive hopes held out by a new doctor, sometimes fancying she gained strength by drinking water from her native mountains in Béarn, listening to the prayers of her Calvinist attendants, and letting her husband offer prayers for her to the Virgin—and so she died in February, 1604.



## The Ceremonies of the Jewish Religion.

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MONTESQUIEU has written, in his *Esprit des Loix*, that "a religion burdened with many ceremonies attaches man to it more strongly than a religion which has but few, from a natural propensity to things in which we are continually employed," and to the many ceremonies attached to the observance of the Jewish religion may be ascribed in a great measure that steadfast adherence to the faith which so pre-eminently characterizes the Hebrew nation.

But what is the origin of the Jewish religion, and what were the distinguishing features which separated it from the religions of the whole world? Abraham is recognized as the father and progenitor of the nation; but those peculiar rites and ceremonies which are the substantial portion of the faith were instituted by Moses, who may be regarded as the founder of the principles of the Jewish religion as now recognized.

Moses was brought up and educated as an Egyptian priest: hence the influence he possessed at the court of Pharaoh; he did not even follow the then principles of the Israelitish faith—as we find years after his marriage with Zipporah he had not initiated his first-born into the Abrahamic covenant. The religion of the Egyptians consisted of symbolical worship. In the earliest periods they had no idea of the nature of the supreme Power, but used to pay adoration to the sun and stars. The sun lights the earth and gives warmth and nourishment to all things. Again, the Egyptians, being an agricultural nation, observed that the annual renewal of the productions of the earth and the natural features of the country were indicated by the rising and setting of certain stars: for instance, the annual overflow of the Nile was indicated by the appearance of a very beautiful star towards the source of the river, which seemed to warn them against being taken by surprise, as a dog by barking gives notice of approaching danger: hence they called this star the "Sirius," or "Dog Star." In the same manner the stars which appeared when the river began to overflow were called the "Stars of Aquarius;" stars of the "Taurus or Bull," those under which it was necessary to plough the earth with oxen; stars of the "Cancer or Crab," those which appeared when the sun, having reached the bounds of the tropic, returned backwards and sideways like a crab; stars of the "Leo or Lion," those which appeared when the lions, drawn by thirst from the desert, appeared on the banks of the Nile; stars of the "Libra or Balance," when the days and nights, being of equal length, maintain an equilibrium; stars of the "Scorpio or Scorpion," those which appeared when certain winds brought a burning vapour like the poison of the scorpion; and so on through the various signs of the Zodiac, and the various



mysterious figures which identify the stars on the celestial globe. These stars were their great warners, and their "signs for seasons, for days, and years;" and as, according to the Egyptian belief, they were constantly watching over their destiny and warning them of coming events, so in process of time they were regarded as deities and worshipped. In the course of events, however, the people, who knew at what time of the year the natural features of the country would occur from experience of prior years, omitted to regulate these periods by observation of the skies, and so forgot the motive which led to the adoption of these signs. The result followed that the symbols, instead of the signs they were intended to denote, were worshipped, and invested with the attributes of the stars. They prayed to the bull for a plentiful harvest—to the scorpion not to pour out his venom upon nature. They revered the crab, the ram, the calf, and the serpent as gods, which originally only served as the symbols of the various ordinations of creation.

The religion which Moses first taught, and then different to all religions in existence, was the abolition of *all* symbolical worship, and the adoration of a Deity which constituted all things. There was only *one* such power, whose name was Jehovah, and should be worshipped without emblems.

To continually impress the Israelites with the wonders God had worked for them, Moses ordained that all the miracles which occurred during their wanderings in the desert should be perpetually celebrated throughout their generations. Fearful that they might forget the commandments which had been given them, he adopted signs to continually impress these commandments upon their recollection, and framed certain doctrines for their social and domestic regulation, that they might be kept distinct from the contamination of surrounding nations, and by these means establish themselves as a distinct people on the face of the earth. These festivals, signs, and doctrines, then, are the substance of the Jewish religion, and are particularly described in the Jewish laws.

The laws of the Jews are the written and the oral laws, corresponding with the *lex scripta* and the *lex non scripta* of the English law. The written law consists of the commandments written in the Bible given by Moses to the children of Israel, and the oral law of explanations thereof and rules of guidance ordained by Moses and taught by him to the Sanhedrim, or great senate of the nation. The oral law is contained in certain books called the *Mishna*, the *Gemara*, and the *Talmud*. The *Mishna* was originally delivered by tradition in short sentences and aphorisms; this was afterwards written with certain comments and expositions, which together formed the *Gemara*, which means "the complement," because the law is there fully explained. The *Mishna* is the text, the *Gemara* the comment. The *Talmud* comprises both these works, with the opinions of the various rabbis and doctors propounded and decided.

The most profound veneration is paid to the written laws of Moses. The Israelites were thus commanded in Deuteronomy: "And thou shalt

bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." This commandment is followed literally: four sections from the Pentateuch are written on parchment and enclosed in a small leather case, called the phylacteries, which are bound round the left arm by a leathern thong, and a leather case is bound round the head, similarly, for frontlets. The phylactery is placed on the left arm, near the heart, as a token that the heart and soul should be devoted to the service of the Supreme; and the phylactery for the forehead is placed just where the hair begins to grow on that part of the head which is opposite the brain, to show that the imagination and the whole of the senses which are there seated, should be devoted to the service of the Most High. The phylacteries are laid on in the morning, immediately on rising, to show that the Israelite's first thought should be of his Maker. The sections from the law are in like manner written on parchment, and rolled up in cylindrical tubes, which are nailed to the posts of every house and the door-post of every room, in obedience to the commandment before referred to, in order that the Israelite might never enter a room, without being reminded by these tubes of his duty to God and to man. Again, as another guarantee that the commandments should not be forgotten, the children of Israel are commanded to wear fringes on the borders of their garments (Numbers xv. 37—40). This garment is in the shape of two square breast-cloths, joined together by two straps, one being placed as a cover on the breast, the other on the back, and the fringes are hid up in the corner in a curious manner. Four worsted threads are drawn through an eyelet-hole, and a double knot made; one of the threads is then knotted round the other seven times, and then another double knot is made; the same thread is then wound nine times round the others, then eleven times, and then thirteen times, between which respectively, there are double knots made in the same manner as the previous one. This fringe is symbolical: the five double knots are in remembrance of the five books of Moses; the ten single knots, in remembrance of the ten commandments; the seven knotted twists, that the Sabbath should be kept on the seventh day; the nine twists, as a memorial of the nine months of pregnancy; the eleven twists, in recollection of the eleven stars which revered Joseph in his dream; the thirteen knots, in remembrance of thirteen attributes of compassion in the Almighty enumerated by the sages, called the "Shelosh Essry Middoth;" the seven, nine, eleven, and thirteen knots together represent the forty days that Moses was on the mount to receive the ten commandments. There are knots made at the end of each thread to keep them from untwisting, lest thereby the whole of the numerical types might be unravelled. Thus, whether at home or abroad, the Jew is continually reminded of the precepts of his religion, that if in an unguarded moment he should be tempted to commit any evil he may look on the fringes of his garments, and recollect the commandments he is bound to obey.

The Jew is very particular to abstain from partaking of those foods which are enumerated in the Pentateuch as unclean. The method of killing cattle is peculiar, and is only performed by persons who have undergone an examination before the chief rabbi, and received a licence or certificate of due qualification. The ox or other quadruped is secured, and the windpipe cut through with a very sharp-edged long knife; no kind of pressure of the knife on the throat is allowed more than what is necessary. The upper end of the knife is first put to the throat, it is then pushed over to the lower part of the blade, the knife is then drawn back again and then forwards; no stoppage must occur during the operation; and if there appears to have been the slightest notch in the edge of the knife, the flesh of the beast cannot be eaten.

These ceremonies appear to the uninitiated very unnecessary and probably ridiculous, but like many others are capable of explanation founded on good sense. The Israelites are continually forbidden to eat the blood of an animal, "for in the blood is the life." If the beast were struck on the head, the blood, instead of flowing out, would stagnate in the veins, and could never be entirely drawn out. There is no method of killing which so totally removes the blood from the meat. If a notch were in the blade of the knife, the cut would not be clean; the notch would cause a *thrill* to pass through the beast, and consequently repel the blood again through the veins; and in fear that the blood might not be entirely drawn out, the flesh is forbidden.

Matrimonial unions are effected by the introduction of mutual friends. A Jew is only allowed to intermarry with one of his own religion; and in case he may be unacquainted with any Jewish lady suitable to his taste, he mentions his desire for marriage to some friend, who institutes inquiries on his behalf for a suitable connection, and procures both parties an introduction to each other, generally through the medium of a mutual acquaintance. The courtship ordinarily lasts but a few months. On the day appointed for the celebration of the nuptials, the bride and bridegroom are conducted to the place appointed for the ceremony, where they are stationed under a canopy supported by long poles. The bride and bridegroom both drink out of a glass of wine, over which a sanctification has been pronounced by the priest; and the bridegroom, putting a ring on the bride's finger, repeats: "Behold, thou art betrothed unto me with this ring, according to the rites of Moses and Israel." Some blessings are then said, and the bride and bridegroom again drink of the wine, after which the empty wine-glass is laid on the ground, and the bridegroom stamps on and breaks it. Various reasons have been assigned for this ceremony, one of which is to remind the married couple that they are only like brittle ware made of earth, glossy without and rough within; but a more likely interpretation is to remind them of death, to whose power frail mortals must yield, sooner or later. The ceremony being over, all present cry out "*Mozel Tourv*," that is, "*May it turn out happily.*"

Thus we see that all the previous ceremonies are merely symbolical,

whilst the great feature of Judaism consists in the total absence of all symbolical *worship*.

When an Israelite is dying, the last prayer he utters is the grand protestation of his faith that there is but *one* God. A person is always left to watch the corpse from the time of death to the day of interment, to guard it from all sorts of vermin, because that godly likeness, which was given to man at his creation, disappears after his dissolution ; and for that reason no vermin fear men after their death. When a near relative dies, the members of his immediate family rend their garments about a hand's breadth, and the rent is not sewn up again. They also sit on the ground, and mourn for seven days ; and for the space of thirty days from the time of the death, the male relatives do not shave. The term of thirty days is taken from *Deuteronomy* xxxiv. 8.

The Jewish sages, in order to prevent the infringement or violation of any laws, have established a fence round them, by which anything which might possibly lead to the infringement of the law is itself interdicted. For example, the Jews are forbidden to *kindle* a fire on the Sabbath-day ; as a fence they are forbidden by the sages to *touch* the fire when kindled, or to lift a candlestick with a lighted candle in it, or even to *blow out* a candle, or extinguish a fire when kindled. The reason of the commandment to the Israelites not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath-day, has been explained in this way : When the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, the only method they had of kindling a fire was by rubbing two pieces of wood together until a flame was produced. This was a work requiring great exertion, and on account of being a labour, was forbidden on the Sabbath. But the sages forbid any such liberal construction, and follow the commandments literally, so that on account of the prohibition to light a fire on the Sabbath, no Jew smokes a cigar or pipe on that day. Some of the very strict Hebrews carry their religious formalities to an excess. They believe that carrying a handkerchief loose in the pocket, or a superfluous pin in the clothes, is carrying a burden, a work that should not be done on the Sabbath-day. But if they pin the handkerchief to the pocket, or tie it round the waist like a girdle, there is then no harm, as it may be considered a part of the garments. They will not gather any fruit from a tree on the Sabbath, although for their own immediate eating. But if they can get at the fruit with their teeth, they may *bite* off as much as they wish. They will not meddle with any tool, nor write nor sign their names on the Sabbath, nor ride on horseback, nor go by water, nor play on a musical instrument, nor bathe, nor tear, nor break anything, not even a hair, for which reason a very strict Jew will not suffer his hair to be combed on the Sabbath.

In the present day, however, many of these rules are unobserved. The principles of the Jewish faith are not impressed on the rising generation with the same strictness as in former years, and many of the strict rules are looked upon with ridicule, because their meaning is not explained, or, if explained, the reasons are not satisfactory to the inquiring

spirit of the day. It is within the knowledge of the writer of this article that Jewish young men have over and over again inquired the reason for observing certain religious ceremonies; but there are few who can give a satisfactory explanation, and the answer returned is, "Your father, your grandfather, and your great grandfather observed these customs, therefore you must do the same." This is no explanation suitable to an intelligent mind in the present day. It is one of the greatest tests of the philosophical mind when it thinks for itself. The result is that young men do think for themselves; and these customs appearing unintelligible, are often unobserved. Jewish youths are sent to the universities, and receive a classical education, whilst they are ignorant of the very principles of their religion; not one in a hundred ever reads the Talmud, where these customs and ceremonies are explained; and though all the prayers are recited in Hebrew, a Jewish youth who can read his *Télémaque* or Molière's plays at sight, who can translate his Homer, and knows his Latin grammar by heart, cannot decline a Hebrew noun, or conjugate a Hebrew verb.

There have been many maxims laid down by the sages which are not universally received. Some of the ancient Jewish literature in the present day appears rather singular. In the Hagoda, or Passover service, there is a curious specimen of logic. Rabbi Jose asks, "Whence art thou authorized to assert that in Egypt the Egyptians were afflicted with ten plagues, whilst on the borders of the Red Sea they were smitten with fifty plagues?" "Because in Egypt the magicians said to Pharaoh, 'This is the *finger* of God;' but at the Red Sea it says, 'And Israel saw the mighty *hand* wherewith the Lord smote the Egyptians.' If by the *finger* only they received ten plagues, they must of course (?) have received fifty by the hand, as it contains five fingers." (?) This argument is not quite so palpable as an axiom of Euclid. Here is a specimen of logic not to be found in Whately. The Jews think it meritorious to make three meals on the Sabbath-day, because in Exodus xvi. 25, it says, "And Moses said, Eat that *to-day*, for *to-day* is the Sabbath of the Lord; *to-day* ye shall not find it in the field." In this sentence the word *day* is mentioned three times; hence the rabbins infer it is meritorious to make three meals on the Sabbath.

Of the many beliefs which are current in the Hebrew nation, but not credited by those in whose minds there is one spark of enlightenment, we will select a few for illustration.

All dreams come to pass according to the interpretation that is made of them by the person to whom they are revealed; consequently, dreams should only be told to friends (what a fortune to realize as a *favourable* interpreter of dreams!) An apparition has power to become visible and to injure any particular person who may happen to be by himself in the dark. If two persons be together, an apparition may become visible but cannot hurt either, but if three persons be together, no apparition can be visible; if, however, there be one candle alight, it is a safeguard against all evil spirits. What an apparition consists of, and why it should injure

any one, does not appear. Evil spirits rest on all heaps of rubbish, and, therefore, it is dangerous to tread on all such. There is also a belief in witches and their power to injure any one who flings away the tops of green turnips or carrots without untying them. Some of the Jews wear a sort of charm about them consisting of a few cabalistic words written on parchment by a rabbi. There are numerous other spiritual beliefs not taught by the religion of Moses, and evidently the result of ignorance and its natural offspring, superstition, which are generally credited amongst the Jews of Poland and Germany, but the superior education and enlightenment of the English Jew teaches him the folly of superstition. Formerly, when a man was married he used, at the marriage ceremony, to walk round his intended wife three times to see if she really were the right woman he proposed to take as a wife, because of the deceit practised on Jacob by Laban, who first married his son-in-law to his eldest daughter, Leah, under the assurance that it was his daughter Rachel; but such ceremonies are no longer in existence, the English Jew uniting with his religion a spirit of enlightenment and liberalism. The present Jewish belief is vastly different to the religion taught the Israelites by Moses; there have been many innovations through contact with the many nations amongst whom the Jews sojourned, and many of the beliefs of those nations have been imbibed and are now recognized principles of Judaism. The belief in the angels and archangels "Gabriel," "Michael," and "Ariel," was not taught by Moses, but, together with the Jewish months, Nisan, Adar, Yar, &c., came from Babylon. The immortality of the soul was unknown to the Hebrews until their intercourse with the Assyrians. The "Urim and Thummim" of the breastplate of the high-priest, the serpent made by Moses and exhibited to the people, the brazen sea of the Temple upon twelve brazen oxen, the cherubim of the ark, and numerous symbols of the ancient Jewish worship, are all derived from the ancient Egyptians', and were comprised in the mysteries of their religion, which Moses learnt as an Egyptian priest, and then taught the children of Israel in the wilderness.

What was the Jewish religion at the time the Israelites were slaves in Egypt? There were no festivals to observe until they wandered in the wilderness, and Moses ordained those festivals should be kept as a lasting memorial. There were no prohibitions against any particular kinds of foods. There were none of the ceremonies and laws which Moses afterwards instituted. In what did their religion differ from the Egyptians', that the Israelites were always a distinct race? Simply in the absence of *symbolical* worship. In other respects their religion was the same as the Egyptians'; and it was only a corrected form of their religion that Moses afterwards taught the Israelites, which he himself had learned as an Egyptian priest. But from the religion Moses taught, sprung nearly all the religions of the civilized world.



## To Esther.

No. II.

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"Do you remember the story I wrote you in 1860, when I came back from Rome? \* To complain was a consolation, when it was to you I complained. I was lonely enough and disappointed, and yet I have been more unhappy since. Then I thought that at least you were happy, but later they said it was not so, and bitterness and regret overpowered me for a time. But this was after I had written to you.

"I scarcely remember what I said now, it is so long ago, but I know every word had a meaning since you were to see it, and the Esther I wrote to, the Esther whose image was for ever before me, seemed mine sometimes though we were for ever parted. I have often thought that the Esther I loved loved me though the other one married Halbert. Perhaps you were only her semblance, and she was waiting for me elsewhere in a different form. But the familiar face with the sallow cheeks and dark brows, and all the sudden light in it, comes before me as I write even now. I have seen it a thousand thousand times since we parted by the Trinità; do you remember when the bell was ringing for matins? Only as years have gone by the lines have faded a little, the eyes look deep and tender, but they have lost their colour; though I know how the lights and the smiles still come and still go, I cannot see them so plainly. The woman herself I can conjure across the years and the distance, but the face does not start clear-set before me as in those days when I only lived to follow your footsteps, to loiter among the shadows in your way, and the sunshine through which you seemed to move; to drink in the sweet tones of your voice, to watch you when you sat at your window, when you lingered in the silent Italian gardens, or moved with a gentle footfall along echoing galleries, with dim golden pictures, and harmonies of glowing colour all about you.

"What sea-miles and land-miles, what flying years and lagging hours, what sorrows and joys lie between us—and joys separate more surely than sorrows do. People scale prison walls, they wade through rivers, they climb over arid mountains, to rejoin those whom they love, but the great barriers of happiness and content, who has surmounted them?

"I say this, and yet success has been mine since I saw you. Many good things have come to me for which I did not greatly care, but though the spring tides and bright summers and the bitter winter winds and autumnal mists were fated to part us year after year, yet it also seemed destined

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\* See *Cornhill Magazine* for January, 1862.



that I should love you faithfully through all—that even forgetfulness should not prevent it, that disappointment should not embitter, that indifference should not chill. What I have borne from you I could not have endured from any other. Once, long before I knew you, a woman spoke to me hastily, and I left her, and could not forgive her for years, and sometimes I ask myself is my ill-luck a judgment upon me.

“I who was so impatient once and hard of heart, make no merit of my long affection for you, Esther: it was simply fate, and I could not resist it. Changing, unchanging, faithful, unfaithful, who can account for his experiences? Does mistrust bring about of itself that which it imagines? is *everything* there that we fancy we see in people? Often I think that fallen as we are, and weary and soiled by the wayside dust and mud, and the many cares of life, some gleam of the divine radiance is ours still, and to those who love us best it is given to see it. That the sweetness and goodness and brightness we had fancied are no fancies, but truth. True though clouds and darkness come between us, and the mortal parts cannot always apprehend the divine.

“Love is blind; indifference sees more clearly people say, and I wonder if this can be true; for my part I think it is the other way. I have sometimes asked about you from one and from another, and people have spoken of you as if you were to me only what they are, what I am to them, or they to you. I seem to be writing riddles and ringing the changes upon the words which you will not see. Whether you see them or not what does it matter, you would not understand their meaning, their sorrowful fidelity, nor do I wish that you should.

“For, as I have said, years have passed, other thoughts and ties and interests have come to me; I am sometimes even vexed and wearied by my own unchanging nature, and I am tired of the very things from which I cannot tear myself away. I don't think I care for you now, though I still love the woman who jilted me years ago upon the Pincio. It might be that seeing you again all the old tender emotion of feeling would revive towards you. It might be that you would wound me a second time by destroying my dreams, my ideal remembrance; very sad, very sweet, very womanly and trustful my remembrance is. I should imagine you must have hardened—improved as people call it—since then, and been moulded into some different person. Six years spent with Halbert must have altered you, I think, and marred the sweet imperfections of your nature. At any rate you are as far removed from me as if poor Halbert were alive still to torment you.

“This morning at Luchon my courier brought me a letter which interested me oddly enough, and brought back all the old fancies and associations. It came from my cousin's wife, Lady Mary. There were but a few lines, but your name was written thrice in it, and like an old half-remembered tune, all the way riding along the rough road I have been haunted by a refrain—‘Meet Esther again, shall it be, can it be?’—fitting to a sort of rhythm, which is sing-songing in my head at this instant.

"For want of a companion to speak to, I have written this nonsense at length. I cannot talk to my courier except to swear at the roads. They narrowed and roughened as we got into Spain, after we had crossed a bridge with a black river rushing beneath it. High up in the mountains, the villages perched like eagles' lairs; the streams were dashing over the rocks in the clefts below. This is not a golden and sun-painted land like the country we have been used to. Italy seems like summer as I think of it, and this is like autumn to me. The colours have sombre tints; there are strange browns and yellows, faded greens with deep blue shades in them. Stones roll from the pathway and fall crashing into the ravines below. No roads lead to the villages where the people live for a lifetime, tilling their land, weaving their clothes, tending their cattle; many of them never coming down into the valley all their lives long, sufficing to themselves and ignoring the world at their feet. So my guides have told me at least, and it was their business to know. . . ."

All this had been written on the rail of a balcony to the jangling of a church bell and the sympathetic droning of a guitar with one note. It was played by a doleful-looking soldier in tight regimentals, sitting upright on a chair on the landing-place, and never moving a muscle, while the flies buzzed about his head. A motionless companion sat near listening to the melody. Presently, in the midst of his writing, Geoffry Smith, who had scarcely heeded the guitar or the bell, suddenly heard a great chattering and commotion in the street below, and looking over the rail, he saw a crowd of little gipsy children swarming in front of the house. They were trying to climb up into the balcony, getting on one another's backs, clapping their hands, screaming and beckoning to him:—"Mossoo! Mossoo!—tit sou—allons donc!" with an encouraging gesture. "Tit sou—'lons donc—vite, *Mossoo!*" and the brown faces grinned beneath their little Moorish-looking turbans—yellow, green, scarlet handkerchiefs; and all the brown bare legs went capering. The narrow street was crowded with people hurrying to the call of the church bell. Women came out of the low doorways of their houses, adjusting their mantillas. Rosina tripped by with the duenna. Don Basilio strode past with flapping skirts, pantomime-like cocked hat, cotton umbrella and all. Smith looked at them all from over his balcony, like from a box at the opera. At the other end of the place—Plaza de la Constitucion its name was—the French Consul, leaning over his eagle, was sleepily smoking a cigar and watching the church-goers pass by. Strum tumty, strum tumty—tumty strum, went the guitar, and presently—still like a scene at the play—the light darkened, the people looked up at the sky, and there came an artificial clap of thunder from the hill-top over the town, with a sudden storm of hail and lightning. Rosina set off scampering with her duenna. So did the priests; the young men with their bright red caps, lounging at the corner of the street; the old man with his donkey; and the little grinning beggar-children.

Smith thought he too should like to see the inside of the church, which seemed to be looked upon as a safe refuge, for everybody appeared to be rushing in its direction. He had not very far to go: up a short street, and along the Plaza, and then crossing a little wooden drawbridge, Smith found himself at the church door. He stooped and went in through a low Moorish-looking arch, and descended a short flight of black marble steps which led down into the aisle.

It seemed quite dark at first, except that the tapers were flaring at the altar, where three unprepossessing-looking priests were officiating. By degrees Smith found that he was standing in a beautiful old Templar church, with arches, with red silk hangings, and a chequered marble floor, and a dark carved gallery from which some heads were peeping. The women were sitting and squatting on the floor with their shoes neatly ranged at their sides and their babies dandling in their arms. The men were behind, nearer the door; and in the front row of all, grinning, showing their teeth, and plucking at his legs as he went by, Smith discovered the little company of persecuting boys and girls, pretending to bury their faces in their hands when he looked at them sternly, and peeping at him through their wiry little fingers with shining malicious eyes.

The service came to an end; the storm passed away. Smith left the church with the children swarming at his heels, and found his guide waiting with the horses ready harnessed. They had no time to lose the man said—the bill was paid. Smith sprang into the saddle, flung a handful of halfpence to the Moorish little bandits, and rode off as hard as he could go along the rough bridle-path.

It was very late before he got back. He dined by himself about ten o'clock, with a tired, short-sleeved waiter to attend upon him, and then he went and sat under the trees on the Cours, listening to the music and trying to make up his mind. Should he go to Bigorre? Yes; no; un peu; beaucoup; pas du tout. He changed his plans over and over again. About midnight, when the music and the lights were still alive, the people still drinking their coffee and lemonade in the soft starlit night, and chatting and humming all round about, Smith determined at last that he would stay for a day or two longer, and then go to Tarbes and on to Marseilles and to Italy. Having made out this scheme, he called a voiturier with a whip and jack-boots who happened to be passing, and asked him if he was engaged and what was his fare to St. Bertrand. Smith had a fancy to see the old place, which lies on the road to Tarbes. It also lies on the road to Bigorre, but Smith thought that he did not remember this. The guide was a Bigorre man and anxious to get there. He was willing enough to go to St. Bertrand. After that he should like to get home he said. His horses wanted a rest. Smith came to a compromise with him at last. The tired horses were to take him to St. Bertrand, and then they were to make further arrangements.

Two roads cross the country which divides Luchon from Bigorre

One runs direct in noble undulations over hill-tops and mountain ranges. It goes bursting over the great Col d'Aspin, from whence you may see the world like a sea, tossing and heaving at your feet, and trembling with the light upon a thousand hills ; and then it runs down and plunges into deep valleys, where the air is scented with pine-wood.

The other road winds by the plain and follows the course of a flowing river, past villages sun-decked and vine-wreathed, but silent and deserted in their whiteness. A sad-faced woman looks from her cottage-door ; a dark-headed boy comes skimming over the stones with his naked feet, and holds up his hand for alms ; a traveller, resting on a heap by the dusty road-side, nods his head in token of weary fellowship. At last, as you still follow the road in the valley, with the low range on either side, you suddenly reach a great hill with the towers of a strong city rising from its summit. It dominates the land-waves, which seem flowing down from the mountains and the great flat marshes which stretch away to the sea.

Smith chose the flat road to return by, wishing, as I have said, to see St. Bertrand : he had crossed the mountain before, in the course of his travels. He went rolling along through the fresh morning air, with his head full of old sights and thoughts—very far away, hankerings and fancies which he had imagined safely buried in the Campagna or mouldering away with the relics of his old Italian sight-seeing times. Along the banks of the river, crossing and recrossing many times from one side to another, through plains and sunny villages, they had come at last to St. Bertrand, the city on the hill. The driver, a surly fellow, hissed and cursed as the horses went stumbling up the steep ascent, straining and slipping in the blazing sun over bleached white stones. There were four bony horses, ornamented with bells and loaded with heavy harness. Smith reclined at his ease among the fusty cushions of the carriage ; his courier clung nervously to the narrow railing on the box ; Pierre, the driver, cracked his long whip, muttered horrible oaths between his teeth, gulped, choked, shrieked, with hideous jerks and sounds. Everything seems to grow whiter and brighter as they mount. They reach the town at last : there is an utter silence and look of abandonment ; flowers are hanging over the walls and gables and postern gates. They pass fountains of marble, stone casements, and turrets and balconies, all white, blazing, deserted, with geraniums hanging and flowering. They pass under an archway with carvings and emblazonments throwing deep shadows, by strange gables and corners and turrets, up a fantastic street. It was like a goblin city, so dreary, silent, deserted, with such strange conceits and ornaments at every corner.

The hotel was empty, too : one demure, sour visage came to the door to receive them. Yes, there was food prepared ; the horses could be put up in the stables. A human voice seemed to break the enchantment, for I think until then Smith had almost expected to find a sleeping princess upon a bed, a king, a queen, a court, all dreaming and dozing inside this

ancient palace : for the inn had been a palace, at some time or other perhaps inhabited by the ancient Bishops of St. Bertrand, or by some of the nobles whose escutcheons still hang on the gates of the city. There were two tables, both laid and spread in readiness, in the solemn old dining-room, with its white painted panels and carved chimney. Smith was amused to see a Murray lying on the white cloth nearest the window. Even here, in this forgotten end of the world, the wandering tribes of Britain had hoisted the national standard and hastened to secure the best place at the feast. There were three plates, three forks, three knives. Smith, dimly pursuing his morning fancy, and bewitched by the unreality and silence of all about him, thought that this was the place in which he should like to meet Esther again—if he was ever to meet her. Here, in this white blinding silence, she might come like an apparition out of his dreams—come up the steep mediæval street, past the fountain—with her long dress,—how well he remembered it,—rippling over the stones, her slim straight figure standing in relief against the blazing sky. . . . “Cutlets—yes ; and a chicken ; and a bottle of St. Julien.” . . . This was to the waiting-woman, who asked him what he would like.

Geoffry walked out into the garden to wait until his cutlets should be ready, and he found an unkept wilderness, tangled and sweet with autumnal roses, and a carved stone terrace or loggia, facing a great beautiful landscape. As he leaned against the marble parapet, Smith, who still thought he was only admiring the view, imagined Esther walking up the street, coming nearer and nearer, approaching along the tangled walk through the rose-trees, and standing beside him at last on the terrace. It was a fancy, nothing more ; it was not even a presentiment ; all the beautiful world below shimmered and melted into greater and greater loveliness ; an insect went flying and buzzing over the parapet and out into the clear atmosphere ; a rose fell to pieces, and as the leaves tumbled to the ground one or two floated upon the yellow time-worn ledge against which Smith was leaning. No, he would not go to Bigorre ; he said to himself he would turn his horses' heads or travel on beyond Bigorre, to some other mountain—to the Luz or St. Sauveur, or farther still, to Eaux Bonnes, in the heart of the Pyrenees. He pulled out his letter and read it again ; this was all it said, in Lady Mary's cramped little hand :—

*B. de Bigorre.*

DEAR GEOFFRY—Some one has seen you somewhere in the Pyrenees; will you not take Bigorre on your way, and come and spend a few days with us ? It would cheer my husband up to see you; his cough is troublesome still, though he is greatly better than when we left the rectory. There are one or two nice people in the place. I am sure you would spend a few pleasant days. We have the three Vullimeys, Mr. and Mrs. Penton, and Olga Halbert;—that poor Mrs. Halbert, too, is with them; her children make great friends with ours. Mrs. Halbert tells us she knows you. She is very much altered and shaken by her husband's death, though one cannot but feel that it must be more a shock than a sorrow to her, poor woman. The Pentons and Mrs. Halbert are at the hotel. She says they find it comfortable. I know you like being independent best, otherwise we have a nice little room for you, and should

much prefer having you with us while you stay. The children are flourishing, and I expect my sister Lucy to join us in a few days. *Do try and come, and give us all a great deal of pleasure.*

Affectionately yours,

MARY SMITH.

P.S.—I shall send this to St. James's Place on the chance that it may be forwarded back again to you with your other letters,

Smith read the letter and tore it up absently, and threw it on the ground. He would not go to Bigorre; he was past the age of sentiment; he would never marry; he did not want to see Esther again and destroy his remembrance of her, or make a fool of himself perhaps, and be bound to a woman hardened by misfortune, by long contact with worldly minds, by devotion to an unworthy object. How could she prefer Halbert to me? Smith thought, with an amused self-consciousness. Esther was a clever woman: she had thought for herself; she needed a certain intellectual calibre of companionship. Halbert cultivated his whiskers: his best aspirations were after Lady X and Y and Z and their tea-parties; and then Smith wandered away from poor Halbert, who was gone now, to the lovely sight before him.

It was not so much the view as the beautiful fires which were lighting it up. If colour was like music—if one could write it down, and possess for good—the gleams of sudden sweetness, the modulation, the great bursting symphonies of light thrilling from a million notes at once into one great triumphal harmony: if the passion of loveliness—I know no better word—which seems all about us at times, could be written down, one would need words that should change and deepen and sweeten with the reader's mood, and shift for ever into combinations lovely and yet more lovely.

Smith was looking still with a heart full of gratitude and admiration, when he heard a step upon the gravel walk. He turned round to see who was coming. Was this an enchanted city he had come to? A tall slim figure of a woman in black robes advanced along the gravel walk and came to the overhanging terrace where he was standing. Alas! it was no enchantment. The genii had not brought his princess on their wings. It was no one he had ever seen before—no sallow face with the sweet bright look in it; it was only a handsome-looking young woman, one of the thousands there are in the world, with peach-red cheeks and bright keen eyes, who glanced at him suspiciously. Two great black feathers were hanging from her hat; her long silk gown rippled in the sunshine and her black silk cloak was fastened round her neck by a silver clasp.

It was a very charming apparition, Smith thought, though it was not the one he had hoped for—there was nothing gracious about this well-grown young lady. This was no Esther—this was not a woman who would change her mind a dozen times a day, who would be weak and foolish and trustful always. Geoffrey was half repelled, half attracted by the keen determined face, the firm-moulded lines. He might not have



thought twice about her at another time; but in this golden solitude and Garden of Eden it almost seemed as if a companion was wanted. He had been contented enough until now with a shadowy friend of his own exorcising. The lady in black, after looking at the view for a second, turned round and walked away again as deliberately as she had come, and he presently followed her example for want of something better to do. The hills were still melting, roses were flushing and scenting the air, insects floating as before; but Smith, whose train of thought had been disturbed, turned his back upon all their loveliness and strolled into the house to ask if his breakfast was ready.

Prim-face, who was busy at a great carved cupboard, seemed amazed at the question. "You have not seen the cathedral yet: travellers always go over the cathedral before the *déjeuner*. We have had to catch and kill the fowl," in an aggrieved tone. "Encore vingt minutes n'est-ce pas, Auguste!" shrieks the woman suddenly, without budging from her place.

"Vingt minutes," repeats a deep voice from somewhere or other behind the great cupboard, and there was no more to be said on the subject.

Smith spent the twenty minutes during which his chicken was grilling and his potatoes frizzling, in a great lofty cathedral. It stands on the very summit of the hill, high above the town and the surrounding plains: wide flights lead to the great entrance, the walls and roof are bare, but of beautiful and generous proportions: lofty arches vault high overhead. The sunshine, which seems weird and goblin in the city, falls here with a more solemn light: slant gleams flit across the marble pavement as the great door swings on its hinges and footfalls echo in the distance. Smith seemed to recognize the place somehow—it looked familiar: the rough beautiful arches, the vastness, the desertion; no priests, no one praying, no glimmer of shrines and candles; only space, silence, light from the large window, only a solemn figure of an abbot lying upon his marble bed with a date of three hundred years ago.

Smith remembered dreaming of such a place in his old home years and years before, when he was a boy, and had never even heard Esther's name. The abbot on his marble bed seemed familiar, the placid face, the patient hands, the dog crouching at his feet. A great gleam of sun from a window overhead streaked and lighted the marble. Smith sat down on the step of the tomb and looked up at the great window. A white pigeon with a beautiful breast shining in the sun was sitting upon the mul-lion. It sat for a time, and then it flew away with a sudden rush across the violet blue sky. Smith did not move, but waited in a tranquil, gentle frame of mind, like that of a person who is dreaming beautiful dreams, nor had waited very long when he seemed to be conscious of people approaching, voices and footsteps coming nearer and nearer, until at last they were somewhere close at hand, and he overheard the following uninteresting conversation between two voices.

"Why don't they do it up with chintz if they are so poor? chintz costs next to nothing. I am sure that lily of the valley and ribbon



pattern in my dressing-room seems as if it never would wear out. I was saying to Hudson only the other day, 'Really, Hudson, I think while we are away you must get some new covers for my dressing-room.'

Here a second voice interrupted with—"Charles, do you remember any allusion to St. Bertrand in *Jamieson's Lives of the Saints*? I read the book very carefully, but I cannot feel quite certain."

To which the first voice rejoined—"Why, Olga, I do wonder you don't remember. I think Charles has a very bad memory indeed. And so have I; but *you* read so much."

Charles now spoke. "Here, Mira, look at this a-hm—a-interesting monument.—To the right, Mira, to the right. You are walking away from it."

"Dear me, Charles! what a droll creature. He puts me in mind of Uncle John."

"I cannot help thinking," Charles said impressively, "that this is the place Lady Kidderminster was describing at Axminster House. I am almost convinced of it."

"Why don't you ask *him*?" said the Olga voice; upon which Smith heard Charles saying rapidly and speaking his words all in a string as it were—

"Lady-Kidderminster-a-été-beaucoup-frappée-par-une-Cathédrale-dans-les-Pyrénées. Est-ce-qu'elle-a-passé-par-ici? . . . I am sure—I—a beg your pardon.—I had not perceived—" and a stout consequential-looking gentleman, who was in the middle of his sentence, stumbled over Smith's umbrella, while Smith, half amused, half provoked, rose from his seat and seemed to the speaker to emerge suddenly, red beard and all, from the tomb. Mira gave a little scream, Olga looked amused.

"I trust I have not seriously injured—a-hm!—anything," said the gentleman; "we were examining this—a—relic, and had not observed—" Smith made a little bow, and another to the beautiful apparition on the terrace, whom he recognized. Next to her was standing another very handsome youngish lady, stout, fair, and grandly dressed, who graciously acknowledged his greeting, while Olga slightly tossed her head, as was her way when she thought herself particularly irresistible. Behind them the curé was waiting—a sad, heavy-featured man, in thick country shoes, whose shabby gown flapped against his legs as he walked with his head wearily bent. He only shrugged his shoulders at the many questions which were put to him. Such as, Why didn't they put in stained glass windows? wasn't it very cold in winter? was he sure he didn't remember Lady Kidderminster? Leading the way, he opened a side door, through which Smith saw a beautiful old cloister, with a range of violet hills gleaming through the arches. It was unexpected, like a delightful surprise, and gave him a sudden thrill of pleasure.

"What a delightful place you have here," he said to the guide. "I think I should like to stay altogether."

"Not many people care to pass by this way now," said the curé. "It

is out of the road; they do not like to bring their horses up the steep ascent. Yes, it is a pretty point de vue. I come here of an evening sometimes."

"Extremely so," said Mira. "Olga, do you know I am so tired? I am convinced that I want bracing. I wish we had gone to Brighton instead of coming to this hot place.—Charles, do you think the 'déjeuner' is ready? I am quite exhausted," she went on, in the same breath.

"Would ces dames care to see the vestments?" the curate asked, a little wistfully, seeing them prepare to go.

"Oh-a-merci, we are rather pressed for time," Charles was beginning, when Smith saw that the man looked disappointed, and said he should like to see them. Olga, as they called her, shook out her draperies, and told Charles they might as well go through with the farce, and Mira meekly towered after her husband and sister. These are odious people, poor Smith thought. The ladies are handsome enough, but they are like About's description of his two heroines: "L'une était une statue, l'autre une poupée." This statue seemed always complacently contemplating its own pedestal. In the *sacristie* there were only one or two relics and vestments to be seen, and a large book open upon a desk.

"People sometimes," said the curé, humbly shuffling and looking shyly up, "inscribe their names in this book, with some slight donation towards the repairs of the church."

"I thought as much," said Olga, while Charles pompously produced his purse and began fumbling about. Smith was touched by the wistful looks of the guide. This church was his child, his companion, and it was starving for want of food. He wrote his name—"Mr. Geoffry Smith"—and put down a napoleon on the book, where the last entry was three months old, of two francs which some one had contributed. The others opened their eyes as they saw what had happened. The curé's gratitude and delight amply repaid Geoffry, who had more napoleons to spend than he could well get through. The pompous gentleman now advanced, and in a large, aristocratic hand inscribed,—“Mr. and Mrs. Penton, of Penton;” “Miss Halbert.” And at the same time Mr. Penton glanced at the name over his own, and suddenly gleamed into life, in that way which is peculiar to people who suddenly recognize a desirable acquaintance.

"Mr. Smith, I have often heard your name. You knew my poor brother-in-law, Frank Halbert, I believe.—Mrs. Penton—Miss Halbert.—A most curious and fortunate chance—hm-a!—falling in with one another in this out-of-the-way portion of the globe. Perhaps we may be travelling in the same direction? we are on our way to Bigorre, where we rejoin our sister-in-law, Mrs. Frank Halbert."

Geoffry felt as if it was the finger of Fate interfering. He followed them mechanically out into the street.

"How hot the sun strikes upon one's head. Do you dislike it?—I do," said Mrs. Penton, graciously, as they walked back to the hotel together. . . .

People say that as they live on, they find answers in life to the problems and secrets which have haunted and vexed their youth. Is it so? It seems as if some questions were never to be answered, some doubts never to be solved. Right and wrong seem to change and blend as life goes on, as do the alternate hours of light and darkness. Perhaps some folks know right from wrong always and at all times. But there are others weak and inconsistent, who seem to live only to regret. They ask themselves with dismay, looking back at the past—Was that me myself? Could that have been me? That person going about with the hard and angry heart; that person uttering cruel and unforgiving words; that person thinking thoughts that my soul abhors? Poor Esther! Often and often of late her own ghost had come to haunt her, as it had haunted Smith—sometimes in a girlish guise, tender, impetuous, unworn and unsoiled, and unseared by the wayside wear, the thorns and the dust of life. At other times—as she could remember herself at one time of her life—foolish, infatuated, mad, and blind—oh, how blind! Her dream did not last very long; she awoke from it soon. It was not much of a story. She was a woman now. She was a girl when she first knew her husband, and another who she once thought would have been her husband. She had but to choose between them. That was all her story; and she took in her hand and then put away the leaden casket with the treasure inside, while she kept the glittering silver and gold for her portion.

Some there be that shadows kiss;  
Some have but a shadow's bliss.

Poor Esther! her shadows soon fled, parted, deepened into night; and long sad years succeeded one another: trouble and pain and hardness of heart, and bitter, bitter pangs of regret; remorse of passionate effort after right, after peace, and cruel failures and humiliations. No one ever knew the life that Esther Halbert led for the six years after she married. Once in an agony of grief and humiliation she escaped to her stepmother with her little girl. Lady Fanny pitied her, gave her some luncheon, talked good sense. Old Colonel Olliver sneered, as was his way, and told his daughter to go home in a cab. He could not advise her remaining with him, and, in short, it was impossible.

"You married Frank with your eyes open," he said. "You knew well enough what you were about when you threw over that poor fellow Smith, as if he had been an old shoe; and now you must make the best of what you have. I am not going to have a scandal in the family, and a daughter without a husband constantly about the house. I'll talk to Halbert and see if matters can't be mended; but you will be disgraced if you leave him, and you are in a very good position as you are. Injured wife, patient endurance—that sort of thing—nothing could be better."

Esther, with steady eyes and quivering lips, slowly turned away as her father spoke. Lady Fanny, her stepmother, was the kindest of the two, and talked to her about her children's welfare, and said she would drive her back in her brougham. Poor Esther dazed, sick at heart;

she thought that if it were not for her Jack and her Prissa she would go away and never come back again. Ah, what a life it was; what a weary delusion, even for the happiest—even for those who obtained their heart's desire! She had a great burst of crying, and then she was better and said meekly, Yes, she would go home, and devote herself to her little ones, and try to bear with Frank. And she made a vow that she would complain no more, since this was all that came to her when she told her troubles to those who might have been a little sorry. Esther kept her vow. Was it her good angel that prompted her to make it? Halbert fell, out hunting, and was brought home senseless only a few days after, and Esther nursed him tenderly and faithfully: when he moaned, she forgave and forgot every pain he had ever inflicted upon her, every cruel word or doubt or suspicion. He never rallied; and the doctors looked graver and graver, until at last Frank Halbert died, holding his wife's hand in his.

The few first weeks of their married life, these last sad days of pain and suffering, seemed to her all that she had left to her; all the terrible time between she blotted out and forgot as best she could, for she would clutch her children suddenly in her arms when sickening memories overpowered her, and so forget and forgive at once. For some time Esther was shocked, shaken, nervous, starting at every word and every sound, but by degrees she gained strength and new courage. When she came to Bigorre she was looking better than she had done for years; and no wonder: her life was peaceful now, and silent; cruel sneers and utterances had passed out of it. The indignities, all the miseries of her past years, were over for ever; only their best blessings, Jack and Prissa, remained to her; and she prayed with all her tender mother's heart that they might grow up different from either of their parents, good and strong and wise and upright—unlike her, unlike their father.

The Pentons, who were good-natured people in their way, had asked her to come; and Esther, who was too lazy to say no, had agreed, and was grateful to them for persuading her to accompany them. She liked the place. The bells sounding at all the hours with their sudden musical cadence, the cheery stir, the cavalcades arriving from the mountains, the harnesses jingling, the country-folks passing and repassing, the convents tinkling, Carmes close at hand, Carmelites a little farther down the street,—the streams, the pretty shady walks among the hills, the pastoral valley where the goats and the cattle were browsing;—it was all bright and sunshine and charming. Little Prissa in her big sun-bonnet, and Jack helping to push the perambulator, went up every morning to the Salut, along a road with shady trees growing on either side, which led to some baths in the mountain. One day the children came home in much excitement, to say they had seen a horse in a chequed cotton dressing-gown, and with two pair of trowsers on. But their greatest delight of all was the Spaniard of Bigorre with his pack. Esther soon grew horribly tired of seeing him parading about in a dress something between a brigand and a circus-rider, but Prissa and Jack never wearied, and the dream of their outgoing

and incoming was to meet him. Prissa's other dream of perfect happiness was drinking tea on the terrace at the Châlet with little Geoffry and Lucy and Lena Smith, where they all worshipped the Spaniard together, and told one another stories about the funny horse and the little pig that tried to eat out of Lena's hand. Their one trouble was that Mademoiselle Bouchon made them tell their adventures in French. At all events they could *laugh* in English, and she never found it out. Lady Mary would come out smiling while the tea was going on, and nod her kind cap-ribbons at them all. She was a portly and good-humoured person who did foolish things sometimes, and was fond of interfering and trying to make people happy her own way. She had taken a fancy to Esther, and one day—ingenious Lady Mary—she said to herself, "I am sure this would do for poor Geoffry : he ought to marry. This is the very thing. Dear me, I wish he would come here for a day or two," and she went back into her room and actually wrote to him to come.

The two ladies went to the service of the Carmes that evening. It was the fashion to go and listen for the voice of one of the monks. There was a bustle of company rustling in : smart people were coming up through the darkening streets; old French ladies protected by their little maids, arriving with their "heures" in their hands ; lights gleamed in the windows here and there, and in the chapel of the convent a blaze of wax and wick, and artificial flowers, and triumphant music. It was a lovely voice, thrilling beyond the others, pathetic with beautiful tones of subdued passionate expression. The Carme who sang to them was a handsome young man, very pale, with a black crisp beard : his head overlooked all the others as they came and went with their flaming tapers in mystic progressions. Was it something in the man's voice, some pathetic cadence which recalled other tones to which Esther had listened once in her life, and that of late years she had scarcely dared to remember ? Was it chance, was it fate, was it some strange presentiment of his approach, which made Esther begin to think of Rome, and of the days when she first knew Geoffry, and of the time before she married ? As she thought of old days she seemed to see Smith's kind blue eyes looking at her, and to hear his voice sounding through the music. How often she had longed to see him—how well she remembered him—the true heart, the good friend of her youth.

Esther's heart stirred with remembrances of things far far away from the convent and its prayers and fastings and penances. Penance and fastings and vigils—such things should be her portion, she thought, by rights ; and it was with a pang of shame, of remorse, of bitter regret, and of fresh remorse for the pang itself, that she rose from her knees—the service over, the music silent, and wax-lights extinguished—and came out into the night with her friend. As they were walking up the street Lady Mary said quietly and unconsciously enough, though Esther started guiltily and asked herself if she had been speaking her thoughts aloud—

"Mrs. Halbert, did you ever meet my husband's cousin, Jeff Smith ?

I hear he is in the Pyrenees; I am writing to him to come and stay with us, he is such a good fellow."

Esther, if she had learnt nothing else since the old Roman days, had learnt at least to control herself and to speak quietly and indifferently, though her eyes suddenly filled with tears and there came a strange choking in her throat. Her companions noticed nothing as Mrs. Halbert said, "Yes, she had known him at Rome, but that she had not seen him for years."

"Ah, then, you must renew your acquaintance," Lady Mary said; adding, abruptly, "Do you know, I hear a Carmelite is going to make her profession next week: we must go. These things are horrible, and yet they fascinate me somehow."

"What a touching voice that was," said Esther. "It affected me quite curiously." To which Lady Mary replied,—

"I remember that man last year: he has not had time to emaciate himself to a mummy. He sat next me at the table-d'hôte, and we all remarked him for being so handsome and pleasant, and for the quantities of champagne he drank. There was a little quiet dark man, his companion. They used to go out riding together, and sit listening to the music at the Thermes. There was a ball there one night, and I remember seeing the young fellow dancing with a beautiful Russian princess."

"Well?" said Esther, listening and not listening.

"Well, one day he didn't come to dinner, and the little dark man sat next me alone. I asked after my neighbour; heard he had left the place, but Marguerite—you know the handsome chamber-maid—told me, under breath, that Jean had been desired to take the handsome gentleman's portmanteau down on a truck to the convent of the Carmes; a monk had received it at the garden door, and that was all she knew. I am sure I recognized my friend to-night. He looked as if he knew me when he came round with the purse."

"Poor thing," said Mrs. Halbert, sighing. Esther came home to the hotel, flushed, with shining eyes, looking like she used to look ten years ago. She found Mrs. Penton asleep in the sitting-room, resting her portly person upon the sofa. Olga was nodding solemnly over a dubious French novel. Mr. Penton was taking a nap behind his *Galignani*—the lamp was low. It all looked inexpressibly dull and commonplace after the glimpses of other lives which she had had that night. She seemed lifted above herself somehow by the strains of solemn music, by memories of tenderest love and hopeless separation, by dreams of what might have been, what had been before now, of the devotion which had triumphed over all the natural longings and aspirations of life. Could it be that these placid people were of the same race and make as herself and others of whom she had heard? Esther crept away to the room where her children were sleeping in their little cots with faithful old Spicer stitching by the light of a candle. As the mother knelt down by the girl's little bed, a great burst of silent tears seemed

to relieve her heart, and she cried and cried, she scarcely dared tell herself why.

Have you ever seen a picture painted in black and in gold? Black-robed saints, St. Dominic and others, on a golden glory, are the only instances I can call to mind, except an Italian painter's fancy of a golden-haired woman in her yellow damask robe, with a mysterious black background behind her. She had a look of my heroine, though Esther Halbert is an ugly woman, and the picture is the likeness of one of those beautiful fair-haired Venetians whose beauty (while people are still saying that beauty fades away and perishes) is ours after all the centuries, and has been the munificent gift of Titian and his compeers, who first discerned it, to the unknown generations that were yet to be born and to admire. As one looks at the tender face, it seems alive, even now, and one wonders if there is light anywhere for the yellow lady. Can she see into that gloom of paint more clearly than into the long gallery where the people are pacing and the painters are working at their easels?—or is she as blind as the rest of us? Does she gaze unconscious of all that surrounds her? Does she fancy herself only minute particles of oil and yellow ochre and colouring matter, never guessing that she is a whole, beautiful with sentiment, alive with feeling and harmony?

I daresay she is blind like the rest of us, as Esther was that Friday in July when she came hurrying through the midday sunshine, with her little son scampering beside her, hiding his head from the burning rays among the long folds of her black widow's dress.

At Bigorre, in the Pyrenees, there is one little spot where the sun's rays seem to burn with intenser heat—a yellow blaze of light amid black and sudden shade. It is a little *Place* leading to the *Thermes*. In it a black marble fountain flows, with a clear limpid stream, and a Roman inscription still renders grace for benefits received to the nymph of the healing waters. Arched gates with marble corner-stones, windows closed and shuttered, form three sides of the little square; on the fourth there is a garden behind an iron railing, where tall hollyhocks nod their heads, catalpas flower and scent the air, and great beds of *marguérites* and sad autumnal flowers lead to the flight of black marble steps in front of the house.

Esther, hurrying along, did not stop to look or to notice. She was too busy shielding and helping little blinded Jack to skurry across the burning desert, as he called it. They reached the shady street at last. Jack emerged from his mother's skirts, and Esther stopped, hesitated, and looked back across the place from which they had just come. The sun was blinding and burning, great dazzling patches were in her eyes, and yet— It was absurd; but she could not help thinking that she had seen some one as she crossed: a figure that she seemed to *remember* seeing—rather to have seen, coming down the black marble steps of the house in the garden—a figure under an umbrella,



which put her in mind of some one she had known. It was absurd: it was a fancy, an imagination; it came to her from the foolish thoughts she had indulged in of late. And yet she looked to make sure that such was the case; and, turning her head, she just saw in the distance a man dressed in white, as people dress in the Pyrenees, walking under a big umbrella down the opposite street, which leads to the Baths. Esther smiled at her own fancies. An umbrella! why should not an umbrella awaken associations?

"Come along, mamma," said Jack, who had seen nothing but the folds of his mother's dress, and who was not haunted by associations as yet. "Come along, mamma; don't stop and think."

Esther took Jack's little outstretched paw into her long slim fingers, but as she walked along the shady side of the street—past the Moorish shop-fronts arched with black marble, with old women gossiping in the interiors, and while Jack stared at the passers-by, at a monk plodding by with sandalled feet, at a bath-woman balancing an enormous machine on her head, or longed as he gazed at the beautiful peaches and knitted wool-work piled on the shop ledges, Esther went dreaming back to ten years before, wishing, as grown-up people wish, not for the good things spread before them, but for those of years long gone by—for the fruit long since eaten, or rotten, or planted in the ground.

"Mammy, there's the Spaniard. Oh! look at his legs," said Jack, "they are all over ribbons." And Esther, to please him, smiled and glanced at a bandy-legged mountebank disposing of bargains to two credulous Britons.

"Why, there's uncle Penton come back," Jack cried in great excitement; "he is buying muffetees. Mammy, come and see what he has got," cried Jack, trying to tug away his hand.

"Not now, dear," said Esther. The slim fingers closed upon Jack's little hand with too firm a grasp for him to escape, and he trudges on perforce.

They had almost reached the hotel where they lived by this time. The great clock-tower round which it is built serves as a landmark and beacon. The place was all alive—jangling and jingling; voices calling to one another, people passing and repassing along the wooden galleries, horses clamping in the court-yard. A riding-party had just arrived; yellow, pink, red-capped serving-women were hurrying about, showing guests to their chambers or escorting them across the road to the dependencies of the house.

As Esther and her little boy were walking along the wooden gallery which led to her rooms, they met Masters, Mrs. Penton's maid, who told them with a sniff that her mistress was in the drawing-room.

"Was Mrs. Penton tired after her journey last night?" Esther asked. "I was sorry not to be at home to receive her, but I did not expect you till to-day."

"No wonder she's exhausted," said Masters; "not a cup of tea have

we 'ad since we left on Tuesday-week. They wanted me to take some of their siroppy things. I shan't be sorry to see Heaton Place again, I know."

Masters was evidently much put out, and Esther hurried on to the sitting-room, where she found Mrs. Penton lying down as usual, and Olga, in a state of excitement, altering the feathers in her hat.

"How d'ye do, dear?" said Mrs. Penton. "We are come back again."

"We have had a most interesting excursion," said Olga, coming up to kiss her sister-in-law. "I wish you had cared to leave the children, Esther. You might have visited the Lac d'Oo, and that most remarkable ruin, St. Bertrand de Comminges. In *Jamieson's Lives of*——"

"We met such a nice person," interrupted Mrs. Penton. "He came to Bigorre with us in another carriage, but by the same road. He knows you, Esther, and he and Olga made great friends. They got on capitally over the cathedral, and he kindly fetched the Murray for us. We had left it on the table in the *salle-à-manger*, and were really afraid we had lost it." And Mrs. Penton rambled on for a whole half hour, unconscious that no one was listening to her.

Esther had turned quickly to Olga, and asked who this was who knew her.

"Oh, I daresay you don't remember the name," said Olga, rather consciously. "Smith—Mr. Smith of Garstein. He told me he had known you at Rome, before he came into his property."

"Did he say that?" said Esther, flushing a little.

"Or before you married, I really don't remember," said Olga. "We had a great deal of conversation, and persuaded him to come back to Bigorre."

"It's so hot at twelve o'clock," Mrs. Penton was going on; "and parasols are quite insufficient. Are you fond of extreme heat, Esther? Charles says that Lady Kidderminster, summer and winter, always carries a fan in her pocket. They are very convenient when they double up, and take less——"

"What sort of looking person is Mr. Smith?" Esther asked, with a little effort.

"Distinguished-looking, certainly: a long red beard, not very tall, but broadly built, and a very pleasant gentlemanlike manner. You shall see him at the table-d'hôte to-day; he promised to join us. In fact," said Olga, "he proposed it himself."

"I heard him," said Mrs. Penton, placidly. "Olga, I think you have made another conquest. I remember" &c.

Poor Esther could not wait any longer to hear Mrs. Penton's reminiscences, or Olga's self-congratulations; she went away quickly with Jack to her own room, and got her little Prissa into her lap, and made her put her two soft arms round her neck and love her. "Mamma, why are you crying?" said Jack; "we are both quite well, and we have been very good indeed, lately. Madame Bouchon says I am her petty *mari*. I shan't marry her though. I shall marry Lena when I'm a man."

Esther dressed for dinner in her black gauze gown, and followed the others to her usual place at the long, crowded table. Her hands were cold, and she clasped them together, reminding herself by a gentle pressure that she must be quiet and composed, and give no sign that she remembered the past. She no longer wore her widow's cap, only a little piece of lace in her hair, in which good old Spicer took a pride as she pinned up the thick braids. Her grey eyes were looking up and down a little frightened and anxiously: but there was no one she had ever seen before, and she sat down with a sigh of relief; only in another minute, somehow, there was a little stir, and Olga said,—“Esther, would you make room,” and popped down beside her; and then Esther, looking up, saw that her sister-in-law was signing to some one to come into the seat next beyond her. Some one in this case means the particular person, and there he was. Esther had been nervous and excited, but she was suddenly quite herself again. As Smith took his place, he bent forward, and his eyes met Esther's, and he put out his hand. Is it my old Esther? he thought, with a thrill of secret delight at meeting her at last; while Esther, as she put out her slim fingers, said to herself, Is this my old friend? and she looked wistfully to see whether she could read his kind, loyal heart, stamped in his face as of yore. They were both quite young people again for five minutes, and Olga attributed the laughter and high spirits of her neighbour to the charms of her own conversation. Esther said not one word, did not eat, did not drink, but was in a sort of dream.

After dinner they all got up, and went and stood in one of the wooden galleries, watching the lilac and gold as it rippled over the mountains, the Bedat, the Pic du Midi. And so this was all, and the long-looked-for meeting was over. Esther thought it was so simple, so natural, she could hardly believe that this was what she had hoped for and dreaded so long. There was Smith, scarcely changed,—a little altered in manner perhaps, with a beard which improved him, but that was all. All the little tricks of voice and of manner, so familiar once, were there; it was himself. She was glad, and yet it was not all gladness. Why did he not come up to his old friend? Why did he not notice or speak to her? Why did he seem so indifferent? Why did he talk so much to the others, so little to her? Esther was confused, disappointed, and grieved. And yet it was no wonder. She thought she of all people had least right to expect much from him. She was leaning over the side of the gallery, Olga stood next to her in her white dress, with the light of the sunset in her raven black hair, and Smith was leaning against one of the wooden pillars, and talking to Olga. He glanced from the raven black hair to the gentle bent head beyond. But he went on talking to Olga. Esther felt a little lonely, a little deserted. She was used to the feeling, but she sighed, and turned away with a little impatient movement from the beautiful lilac glow. A noisy, welcome comfort was in store for her. With a burst of childish noise and laughter, Prissa and Jacky came rushing up the gallery, and jumped upon her with their little eager arms wide open.

"Come for a walk, a little, little short walk, please, mammy," said Jack. And Esther kissed him, and said yes, if he would fetch her hat and her gloves, and her shawl.

As she was going, Smith came up hesitating, and said, not looking her full in the face,—

"I had a message from my cousin, to beg you to look in there this evening. Miss Halbert has kindly promised to come." And Esther also, looking up with a reproachful glance he thought, answered very quietly she would try to come after her walk. He watched her as she walked away down the long gallery with her children clinging to her side; and all the sunset lights and shadows falling upon them as they went. "What a pretty picture it makes," he said to Miss Halbert.

"I'm so glad you think Esther nice-looking," said Olga. "It is not everybody who does. Shall we take a stroll towards the music, Mr. Smith? . . .

Esther had no heart for the music and company, and wandered away into a country road. All the fields of broad Indian-corn leaves were glowing as the three passed along: low bright streaks lay beyond the western plains, and a still evening breeze came blowing and gently stirring the flat green leaves. Jacky and Prissa were chattering to one another. Esther could not speak very much; her heart was too full. Was she glad—was she sad? What had she expected? Was this the meeting she had looked for so long? "He might have spoken one word of kindness, he might have said something more than that mere How do you do? Of course he was indifferent—how could it be otherwise? but he might have shammed a little interest," poor Esther thought; "only a very little would have satisfied me."

It was quite dark when she reached Lady Mary's, after seeing her children to bed. Olga, and Mr. Penton, and Smith were there already, and Lady Lucy was singing, when Esther came into the great bare dark room. The young lady was singing a little French song in the dimness, with a pathetic, pleasant tune,—"*Si tu savais*," its name was. She gave it with charming expression, and when she had finished, they were all silent for a moment or two, until Lady Mary began to bustle about and to pour out the tea.

"Take this to Mrs. Halbert, Geoffry," she said, "and tell her about my scheme for to-morrow, and persuade her to come."

Smith brought the tea as he was bid.

"We all want to go over to Grippe, if you will come too," he said.

He looked down kindly at her as he spoke, and the poor foolish woman flushed up with pleasure as she agreed to join them. She was sorry afterwards when she, and Olga, and Mr. Penton walked home together through the dark streets.

"I wonder whether Mr. Smith means to join all our excursions," said Miss Halbert. "I just mentioned my wish to see Grippe, and he jumped at it directly."

But Esther felt a chill somehow as Mr. Penton answered,—

“Certainly, I—a—remarked it, Olga; you—a are not—perhaps aware that you have attractions—to a—no common degree. Mr. Smith has certainly—a—discovered them.”

Poor Esther! it seemed hard to meet her old friend at last, only to see how little he remembered her; and yet she thought all is as it should be; and with my Jacky and my Prissa to love, I am not to be pitied. Still, there was a strange ache in her heart next morning, when they all assembled after the early breakfast: she could not feel cheery and unconscious like Lady Mary, or conscious and flattered like Olga. The children in their clean cotton frocks were in raptures, and so far Esther was happy.

The road to Grippe is along a beautiful mossy valley, with a dashing stream foaming over the pebbles, and little farms and homesteads dotting the smooth green slopes. Olga and Smith were on horseback; Penton was also bumping majestically along upon a huge bay horse; Esther and Lady Mary, and the Smith children and her own, were packed away into a big carriage with Mdlle. Bouchon, and little Geoffry Smith on the box. The children were in a state of friskiness which seriously alarmed the two mammas. They seemed to have at least a dozen little legs a-piece. Their screams of laughter reached the equestrians, who were keeping up a somewhat solemn conversation upon the beauties of nature, and the cultivation of Indian corn: Geoffry wondered what all the fun might be, and Olga remarked that the children were very noisy, and that Esther certainly spoilt little Jack.

“Lady Kidderminster strongly advises his being sent to a preparatory school,” said Penton, with a jog between each word; while Smith looked up at the blue sky, then down into the green valley, and forgot all about them, trying to catch the tones of the woman he had loved.

The chalet was a little rough unfinished place at the foot of the Pic: the horses were put up, and the excursionists got down; they all drank milk in clean wooden bowls, crowded round the wood fire, and peeped at the rough workmen and shepherds who were playing cards in the next compartment—room it could not be called, for the walls were only made of bars of wood at a certain distance from each other. The children’s delight at seeing all over the house at once was unbounded. Jacky slipped his hand between the wooden bars, and insisted on shaking hands with a great rough road-maker in a sheepskin, who smiled kindly at the little fellow’s advances.

Lady Mary was very much disappointed and perplexed to see the small result of her kindly schemes. It was unbelievable that Geoffry should prefer that great, uninteresting, self-conscious Miss Halbert, to her gentle and tender little widow; and yet it was only too evident. What could be the reason of it? She looked from one to the other. Esther was sitting by the fire on a low wooden stool. She seemed a little sad, a little drooping. The children were laughing about her as usual; and she

was holding a big wooden bowl full of milk, from which they sipped when they felt inclined. The firelight just caught the golden tints in her brown, thick hair; her hat was on the floor at her feet; little Prissa—like her, and not like her—was peeping over her shoulder. It was a pretty picture: the flame, the rough and quaint simplicity of the place, seemed to give it a sort of idyllic grace. As for Smith, he was standing at the paneless windows looking out at the view: all the light was streaming through his red beard. It was a straight and well-set figure, Lady Mary thought; he looked well able to take care of himself and of her poor gentle Esther, too. He was abstracted—evidently thinking of something besides the green valleys and pastures—could it, could it be that odious affected woman stuck up in an attitude in the middle of the room who was the object of his dreams?

An odd jumble of past, present, and future was running through Geoffrey's mind, as he looked out of the hole in the wall, and speculated upon what was going to happen to him here in this green pasture-land by the side of the cool waters. Were they waters of comfort—was happiness his own at last? somewhat sadly he thought to himself that it was not now what it would have been ten years ago. He could look at the happiest future with calmness. It did not dazzle and transport him as it would have done in former times—he was older, more indifferent: he had seen so many things cease and finish, so many fancies change, he had awakened from so many vivid dreams, that now perhaps he was still dreaming; life had only become a light sleep, as it were, from which he often started and seemed to awaken. Even Esther . . . what did it all mean? did he love her less now that he had seen her, and found her unchanged, sweeter if possible—and he could not help thinking it—not indifferent? Would the charm vanish with the difficulties, as the beauty of a landscape ends where the flat and prosperous plains begin. He did not think so—he thought so—he loved her—he mistrusted her; he talked to Olga, and yet he could not keep his eyes from following Esther as she came and went. All she said, all she did, seemed to him like some sort of music which modulates and changes from one harmonious thing to another. A solemn serenity, a sentiment of wordless emotion was hers, and withal, the tender waywardness and gentle womanliness which had always seemed to be part of her. She was not handsome now, any more than she had ever been—the plain lines—the heavy hair—the deep-set eyes were the same—the same as those eyes Smith could remember in Roman gardens, in palaces with long echoing galleries, looking at him through imploring tears on the Pincian Hill. They had haunted him for seven years since he first caught the trick of watching to see them brighten. Now, they brightened when the two little dark-headed children came running to her knee. Raphael could find no subject that pleased him better. Smith was no Raphael, but he, too, thought that among all the beautiful pictures of daily life there is no combination so simple, so

touching as that of children who are clinging about their mother. And these pictures are to be seen everywhere and in every clime and place; no galleries are needed, no price need be paid; the background is of endless variety, the sun shines, and the mother's face brightens, and all over the world, perhaps, the children come running into her arms. White arms or dusky, bangled or braceleted, or scarred with labour, they open, and the little ones, clasped within loving walls, feel they are safe.

Quite oblivious of some observation of Miss Halbert's, Smith suddenly left his window and walked across to the fire, and warmed his hands, and said some little word to Esther, who was still sitting on her low seat. She was hurt and annoyed by his strange constraint and distance of manner. She answered coldly, and got up by a sudden impulse, and walked away to where Lady Mary was standing cutting bread-and-butter for the children. "Decidedly," thought the elder lady, "things are going wrong. I will ask Geoffry to-night what he thinks of my widow." "I am a fool for my pains," Geoffry thought, standing by the fire, "and she is only a hard-hearted flirt after all."

He was sulky and out of temper all the way back. In vain did Olga ransack her brain, and produce all her choicest platitudes for his entertainment. In vain Penton recalled his genteel reminiscences. Smith answered civilly, it is true, but briefly and constrainedly. He was a fool to have come, to have fancied that such devotion as his could be appreciated or understood by a woman who had shown herself once already faithless, fickle, unworthy. Smith forgot, in his odd humility and mistrust of himself, that he, too, had held back, made no advance, kept aloof, and waited to be summoned.

Geoffry had the good habit of rising early, and setting out for long walks across the hills before the great heat came to scorch up all activity. The water seemed to sparkle more brightly than later in the day. The flowers glistened with fresh dew. Opal morning lights, with refractions of loveliest colour, painted hills and brooks, the water-plants, the fields where the women were working already, and the slippery mountain-sides where the pine-trees grew, and the flocks and goats with their tinkling bells were grazing. It was a charming medley of pastoral sights and scent and fresh air: shadows trembling and quivering, birds fluttering, green thrilling with colour, the clear-cut ridges of the hills, clear waters bubbling among reeds and creeping plants and hanging ferns, among which beautiful dragon-flies were darting. Smith had been up to the top of the Bedat, and was coming down into civilized life again, when he stopped for an instant to look at the bubbling brook which was rushing along its self-made ravine, some four or five feet below the winding path; a field lay beyond it, and farther still, skirting the side of a hill, the pretty lime-tree walk which leads to the baths in the mountain. Smith, who had been thinking matters over as he stumbled down the steep pathway, and settling that it was too late—she did not care for him—he had ceased caring for her—best go, and leave things as they were—suddenly came upon a



group which touched and interested him, and made him wonder whether, after all, prudence and good sense were always the wisest and the most prudent of things. In the middle of the stream some thousand years ago, a great rock had rolled down from the heights above, and sunk into the bed of the stream, with the water rushing and bubbling all round it, and the water-lilies floating among the ripples. . . . Perched on the rock, like the naïad of the stream, was Esther, with Jacky and Prissa clinging close to her, and sticking long reeds and water-leaves into her hair. The riverkin rushed away, twisting and twirling and disappearing into green. The leaves and water-plants swayed with the ripples, the children wriggled on their narrow perch, while Esther, with a book in her hand, and a great green umbrella, looked bright, and kind, and happy.

"Cousin Jeff, cousin Jeff!" cried little Jack, in imitation of the little Smiths, "come into the steamer, there's lots of room."

"How d'y'e do?" said her mother, still bright, and kind, and happy.

"How d'y'e do, Mrs. Undine?" said Smith, brightening and coming to the water's edge.

As Smith walked back to his breakfast, he thought to himself—"If she would but give me one little sign that she liked me, I think—I think I could not help speaking."

And Lady Mary, who had her little talk out with her cousin after breakfast, discovered, to her great surprise, that what she had thought of as a vague possibility some day, very far off, was not impossible, and might be near at hand after all. She did not say much to Smith, and he did not guess how much she knew of all that was passing in his mind. "He will go away, he will never come forward unless Esther meets him half way," the elder lady thought to herself, as he left the room; and she longed to speak to Esther, but she could not summon courage, though opportunity was not wanting.

They were standing in the balcony of the chalet that very afternoon, watching the people go by: first one child went away, then another, and at last Lady Mary and Esther were left alone. "Look at that team of oxen dragging the great trunks of the trees," said Lady Mary; "how picturesque the peasant people are in their mountain dress!"

"The men look so well in their *bérets*," Esther said; "what a fine-looking young fellow that is who is leading the cart. How much prettier and more picturesque the blue and red caps are than our chimney-pot hats. There is Mr. Smith crossing the street—he would look very well in a *béret*, with his long red beard."

"Certainly he would," said Lady Mary; and then she suddenly added, "Esther, would you do me a favour? They have been talking of going to the fair at Tarbes to-morrow. I shall be obliged to stay at home with my husband and Lucy. Would you bring Geoffry a *béret*, and give it to him, and make him wear it? I know you will if I ask you."

"A red, or a blue one?" said Esther, smiling.

"The nicest you can get," said Lady Mary. "Thank you very much indeed."

Lady Kidderminster, who must have employed her time well while she was in the Pyrenees, "had been very much struck by Tarbes," Mr. Penton declared. "It is pleasantly situated," Murray says, "on the clear Adour, in the midst of a fertile plain in full view of the Pyrenees. Public walks contribute to the public health and recreation. The market-people, in their various costumes, are worth seeing."

Geoffry Smith received a short note from Mrs. Penton two mornings after the Grippe expedition. It ran as follows :—

DEAR MR. SMITH,—Mr. Penton is making an excursion to Tarbes to-day. We start at two, so that we may not miss our lunch, as it is not safe to trust to chance for it, and we should be much pleased for you to join us after, but in case of rain we should give it up. Unfortunately, there appears no chance of anything so refreshing.

Sincerely yours,

MIRA PENTON.

To which Smith, who was rather bewildered, briefly answered that he should be delighted to join them at the station at two. The station was all alive with country folks, in their quaint pretty dresses, *bérets*, red caps, brown hoods, and snooded gay-coloured kerchiefs, and red cloaks like ladies' opera-cloaks. The faces underneath all these bright trappings were sad enough, with brown wistful eyes, and pinched, worn cheeks. Ruskin has written of mountain gloom and mountain glory, and in truth the dwellers among the hills seem to us, who live upon the plain, sad and somewhat oppressed.

Smith looked here and there for his party, and discovered at last, rather to his dismay, Olga, her sister and her brother-in-law, sitting on a bench together. Then Esther had not come after all; he felt inclined to escape and go back to the town, but Olga caught sight of him too, and graciously beckoned.

"Mrs. Halbert is not coming, I am afraid?" said Smith, shaking hands with them.

"Esther, do you mean?" asked Mrs. Penton. "She was here a minute ago. Jacky took her to look at a pig.—Was it a pig or a goat, Olga? I didn't notice."

Mrs. Penton's naïve remarks gave Smith a little trouble sometimes, and he could not always suppress a faint smile. Fortunately Esther came up at this moment, and it was not perceived.

Esther at one time had not meant to come, but she could not resist the children's entreaties, or trust them to the Pentons alone. She was weary and dispirited; she had passed a wakeful, feverish night. How or when or where it began, she did not know, but she was conscious now that in her heart of hearts she had looked to meet Geoffry again some day and hoped and believed that he would be unchanged. But she now saw that it was not so—he liked her only as he liked other people, with that kindly heart of his—no thought of what had been, occurred to him. He

might be a friend, a pleasant acquaintance, but the friend of old, never, never again. How foolish she had been, how unwomanly, how forward. Even at nine-and-twenty Esther could blush like a girl to think how she had thought of Geoffry. She whose heart should be her children's only; she who had rejected his affection when it might have been hers; she who had been faithless and selfish and remorseful so long—she was glad almost to suffer now, she was so angry and vexed with herself. In future she thought she would try to be brave and more simple: she would love her darlings and live for them; and perhaps some day it might be in her power to do something for him—to do him some service—and when they were very old people, she would tell him perhaps how truly she had been his friend all her life.

The sun was blazing and burning up everything. The train stopped at a bridge, and they all got down from their carriages, and set off walking towards the market. Squeak, chatter, jingle of bells, screaming of babies, pigs and pigs and pigs, pretty grey oxen, with carts yoked to their horns, priests, a crowd assembled round an old woman with a sort of tripod, upon which you placed your foot for her to blacken and smarten your shoes; mantillas, green and red umbrellas, rows of patient-looking women, with sad eyes, holding their wares in their hands, scraggy fowls, small little pears, a cabbage, perhaps brought from over the mountain, a few potatoes in a shabby basket;—the scarcity and barrenness struck Smith very sadly. Esther was quite affected; she was emptying her purse and putting little pieces right and left into the small thin hands of the children. They passed one stall where a more prosperous-looking couple—commerçants from Toulouse—were disposing of piles of blue and red Pyrenean caps. Esther stopped and called Jack to her, and tried a little red *béret* on his dark curly head, and kissed her little son as she did so. She had not seen Smith, who was close behind her with Olga, who smiled at the pretty picture. Miss Halbert, soon after leaving the railway carriage, had complained of fatigue, and taken poor Geoffry firmly but gently by the arm, with a grasp which it was impossible to elude. Esther scarcely noticed them: she walked on with her children as usual, and her motherly heart was melting over the little wan babies, whose own mothers found it so hard a struggle to support them. They were lying in the vegetable-baskets on the ground, slung on to their mothers' backs, and staring with their dark round eyes. Some of the most flourishing among them had little smart caps, with artificial flowers, tied under their chins. After buying Jack's *béret*, Mrs. Halbert seemed to hesitate, and then making up her mind she asked for another somewhat larger, which she paid for, and then turned to Smith with her old bright look and gave it him, saying,—

"I think you would look very well in a *béret*, Mr. Smith—don't you like a blue one best?"

Smith wore his *béret* all day; but Olga the inevitable held him, and would not let him go. Esther thought it a little hard, only she was

determined not to think about it. They wandered for hours through the bare burning streets. There seemed to be no shade: the brooks sparkled, bright blazing flowers grew in gardens, the houses were close-shuttered, scarcely any one was to be seen; little bright-plumaged birds came and drank at the streams, and flew away stirring the dust. The children got tired and cross, and weary; the elders' spirits sank. Some one, standing at a doorway, told them of a park, which sounded shady and refreshing, and where they thought they would wait for their train. The road lay along a white lane with a white wall on either side, and dusty poplars planted at regular intervals. Esther tried to cheer the children, and to tell them stories as well as she could in the clouds of dust. Mrs. Penton clung to her husband, Olga hung heavily upon Geoffrey's aching arm. "He might come and help me with the children." Esther thought he would have done so once. They reached the gates of the park at last. It was like utter desolation enclosed behind iron railings—so it seemed, at least, to the poor mother: ragged shrubs, burning sun, weeds and rank grass growing along the neglected gravel walks. There was a great white museum or observatory in the middle to which all these gravel paths converged; and there was—yes, at last—there was a gloomy-looking clump of laurel and fir trees, where she thought she might perhaps find some shade for Jack and for Prissa. As she reached the place, it was all she could do not to burst out crying, she was so tired, so troubled, and every minute the dull aching at her heart seemed to grow worse and worse. Poor Esther! The others came up and asked her if she would not like to see the view from the observatory; but she shook her head, and said she was tired, and should stay where she was, and they all went away and left her. One French lady went by in her slippers, with a faded Indian scarf, and an old Leghorn hat, discoursing as she went to some neglected-looking children,—

"Savez-vous, ma fille, que vous faites des grimaces; ce n'est pas joli, mon enfant, il faut vous surveiller, mon Hélène. Les grimaces ne se font pas dans la bonne société. Le parc est vaste," . . . she continued, changing the subject; her voice dwindled away into the arid, burning distance, and the desolation seemed greater than ever. . . . It seemed to Esther as if hours and hours had passed since the others had left her.

"I have some good news for you," said Smith, cheerfully, appearing from behind the laurels. "Mrs. Halbert, we have only just time to catch the train. Come, Jack, I'm going to be your horse; get up on my back," and Geoffrey set off running with the delighted Jack, just as Olga appeared in search of him.

Esther and Prissa set off running too, and the Pentons followed as best they could.

The little station was again all alive and crowded by peasants and countrywomen, Spanish bandits with their packs, three English tourists in knickerbockers. Smith met them with Jack capering at his side, and swinging by his new friend's hand,—

"I have taken the tickets," he said. "Thank goodness, we have done with Tarbes. What a beastly hole it is."

"I am surprised," Penton remarked, "that Lady Kidderminster should have had such a high opinion of the—a—place. She particularly mentioned an amphitheatre of which I can gain no information."

"Oh, dear! we shall never get in in time for the table-d'hôte," faintly gasped Mrs. Penton, sinking into a seat, "and the dinner will be over."

The benches were full, and they were all obliged to disperse here and there as they could find places. Esther perched herself upon a packing-case, with little Prissa half asleep on her knee. What a dreary day she had spent—she gave a sigh of relief to think it was over.

"Have you room here for Jack?" said Geoffry, coming up. "He won't own he is tired." . . .

"Come, my son," said Esther, putting her arm round the boy, and pulling him up beside her. "You have been very good to Jack, Mr. Smith," she said, with an upward look of her clear eyes.

Smith looked at her.

"It seems very strange," he said, with a sudden emotion, "to meet you again like this. I sometimes wonder whether it is indeed you and me, or quite different people."

"I thought," said Esther, "you had forgotten that we had ever been friends, Mr. Smith."

"I thought *you* had forgotten it," said Smith, very crossly. There was a jar in his voice—there was a mist before her eyes. She was tired, vexed, over-done. Poor Esther suddenly burst into tears.

"My dear, my dear, don't cry," said Smith. "What can I say to beg your pardon? you should have known me better—you . . ."

"I cannot understand about that amphitheatre," said Mr. Penton, coming up. "Murray, you see, does not allude to it."

"Why don't you go and ask the man at the ticket-office?" said Smith authoritatively, and Penton, rather bewildered, obeyed.

"I was a little afraid of you," said Smith, "when I first saw you. I tried to keep away, but I could not help myself, and came. I should have gone to the end of the world if you had been there. I have never changed—never forgotten. I love you as I have always loved you. Dear Esther, say something to me; put me out of this horrible suspense——"

"What a fearful crowd; how it does crush one," said Mrs. Penton, suddenly appearing. "Can you tell me where Charles has hidden himself? He put my eau-de-Cologne in his pocket, and really in this crowd . . ."

Esther could not answer. She was bending over Prissa, and trying to hide her tears. Smith politely pointed out the ticket-office to Mrs. Penton, and then, with great gravity, turned his back upon the lady, and took Esther's hand, and said with his kind voice, "Dear Esther, once you used not to be afraid of telling me what you thought. Won't you speak to me now? Indeed I am the same as I was then."

"And I am not the same?" said Esther smiling, with her sweet face still wet with tears; and with a tender Esther-like impulse she took her children's two little hands and put them into Geoffrey's broad palm.

Geoffrey understood her, though he did not know all she meant. The Pentons joined them again, and the train came up, and the others wearily sank into their places, but Mrs. Halbert's fatigue was gone. All the way back neither Smith nor Esther spoke one word to each other. The sun was setting: all the land was streaming with light; the stars were beginning to shine behind the hills when they got back to Bigorre.

"Will you come for a walk?" said Smith, as he left Esther at the door of the inn; and in the evening he came for her; and, though Olga looked puzzled and not over-pleased, Esther put on her hat, and said,—

"I am ready, Mr. Smith." And they went out together without any explanation.

They went up the pretty lime-tree walk which leads to the baths of the Salut. People were sitting in the dark on the benches talking in low evening whispers. Priests were taking their recreation, and pacing up and down in groups. From the valley below came an occasional tinkle of goats' bells, a fresh smell of wild thyme, a quizzing of crickets. The wain was moving over the hill-side, the lights twinkled from the houses in the town; and Smith and Esther talked and talked, counting over the fears, the doubts, and the perplexities of the last few days. Now, for the first time, Esther felt a comfort and security which had never been hers before, —not even in the first early days of her marriage; not since the time when she bade Smith farewell on the Pincio. It seemed to her now as if all care for the future, all bewilderment and uncertainty, were over. Here was the faithful friend once more ready to do battle for her with the difficulties of life: ready to shield, and to serve, and encourage to decide,—to tell her what was right; and poor Esther had long felt that to her decision was like a great pain and impossibility. But here was Smith to advise, and it seemed to her as if troubles and difficulties became like strong places now that he was there. His manner of looking at life was unlike that of the people among whom she had been living: he seemed to see things from a different level, and yet she felt as if he only saw clearly, and that everything he said was right and true. Some people seem by intuition to see only truth and right; others must needs work it out by failing and sorrow. They realize truth by the pain of what is false, honour through dishonour, right by wrongs repented of with bitter pangs. And Esther had long felt that this was her fate. She did not realize all that she understood later,—only she felt it somehow; she drifted into a peaceful calm, and, thankful, she seemed suddenly and unawares to be gliding through still waters after the tempest.

When she awoke in the morning she knew that he was near at hand; she heard his kind voice, and the children's prattle down in the courtyard below. Later in the day he would come up to see her, and they talked over old days, and the new days seemed to shine with a sudden

gleam now that he had come into them ; the dull hours went more swiftly, the sky seemed brighter ; evening came full of sweet tones, mysterious lights, and peace and perfume ; people passing by seemed strolling, too, in a golden beatitude. They, too, Esther fancied, surely must feel the sweetness and depth of the twilight. The morning came with a bright flash, not dawning with a great weight of pain and listlessness as before. In the hot blaze of the mid-day sun Geoffry would come into the shaded room where the women were sitting at work by the window.

It was, indeed, to him like a memory of old times, to be sitting with Esther at an open window, with the shadows of the orange-trees lying on the floor where the shade of the awning did not reach. Jack liked playing with the shadows, putting his little leg out into the sunshine, and pulling it back, to try and cheat the light and carry some away ; but Prissa (her grown-up name was to be Priscilla) liked best sitting quietly on her mother's knee, and, as it were, staring at the stories she told her with great round eyes. The story broke off abruptly when Smith came in, and another tale began. It seemed like a dream to poor Geoffry to find himself sitting there, with Esther, at an open window, with the sounds and the sunshine without, sounds of horses at the water, of the water rushing, of voices calling to each other, of sudden bursts of bells from the steeples of Bagnères de Bigorre. It seemed to him almost as if all the years were not, and he was his old self again. Can you fancy what it was to him after his long waiting, long resignation, long hopelessness, to find himself suddenly in port, as it were, with his wish there before him and almost within his grasp. Death, indifference, distance, other men and women, years, forgetfulness, chance, and human frailty, had all been between them and divided them, and now all these things surmounted, like a miracle these two seemed to be brought together again, only divided by a remembrance.

Some things seem so familiar, so natural, that though they befall us only once or twice in a lifetime perhaps, yet while they last they seem almost eternal, and as if they had been and would be for ever. They suit us, and harmonize and form part of ourselves and of our nature, and so far in truth they are eternal if we ourselves are eternal, with our sympathy and hopes and faithful love.

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